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NOVEMBER 1995 • £4.99 • CD Edition

Film '96

- Beyond full-motion video
- Easy steps to digital directing

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- Windows 95 – personalise it
- Edinburgh – Internet hot spot

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Reviewed

- Phantasmogoria
- CorelDRAW 6
- Microsoft Office 95

See p16 for your CD guide!



11 >



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viewing angles plus a super-high resolution of up to 1024 x 768 running at 60 frames per second. (Tech-speak for the best graphics in a game ever.)

Scrolling? With Pro-Pinball, it's history. You see ALL of the action ALL of the time - pretty handy when you're playing six balls simultaneously, all shooting

around the table just as nature intended.

And with twenty great soundtracks, interactive speech, genuine mechanical sound effects plus a host of play modes and hidden features, the reality is this:

Pinball novices will be just as spellbound as pinball wizards.

empire
INTERACTIVE

CONTENTS

November 1995 Issue 49



If you look up 'trendy' in the Collins dictionary you will be greeted with a brief but accurate definition; 'consciously fashionable'. And although the phrase belongs rather more in the greed-inspired eighties, I'll not hold back

and proudly state for the world to hear that, finally, the PC is trendy. It's also useful, important, newsworthy, and a large box that sits in the corner of your room that does interesting 'stuff'. But first and foremost, as of today, it is undoubtedly trendy. For instance, at the recent European Computer Trade Show, a show usually plagued by a hundred and one different things to do with a console, there was a veritable assault of PC-related products all vying for the PC Review team's attention. What makes this even more exciting is that only a couple of weeks later was the planned launch of the Sony Playstation. So join me in turning to our console-toting chums and shouting 'yah boo sucks, your box may be flat and fun, but it's not consciously fashionable, and as such is the flared pantaloons of the computing industry'. See if they like that.

Steve James
Managing Editor

Cover Story

8

Apparently video killed the radio star. It also proffers itself as the subject of this months in-depth feature. Rik Henderson and David Bradwell investigate full-motion video and PC influenced digital editing.

6 • November 1995 • PC REVIEW

Features

50

Edinburgh

Edinburgh is, indeed, not only the capital of Scotland, but also the already proclaimed cultural capital of the UK with its comedy and fringe theatre festivals. But that's not good enough for us. We sent Adam Peters up to the Scottish hot-spot during festival time to find out if its new claims of being the 'most wired city' in the UK are truly founded.



▲ Edinburgh • page 50.

54

Game Fight at the MS Coral

Microsoft has been fairly quiet of late. Sheah-right! Cal Jones visits Seattle to find out if Bill Gates and his happy followers can do for games what they did for PC world domination.



▲ Microsoft • page 54.

Regulars

16 Coverdisks

30 Shareware

34 News

68 Subscriptions

144 Q&A

148 Letters

150 Surf of the month

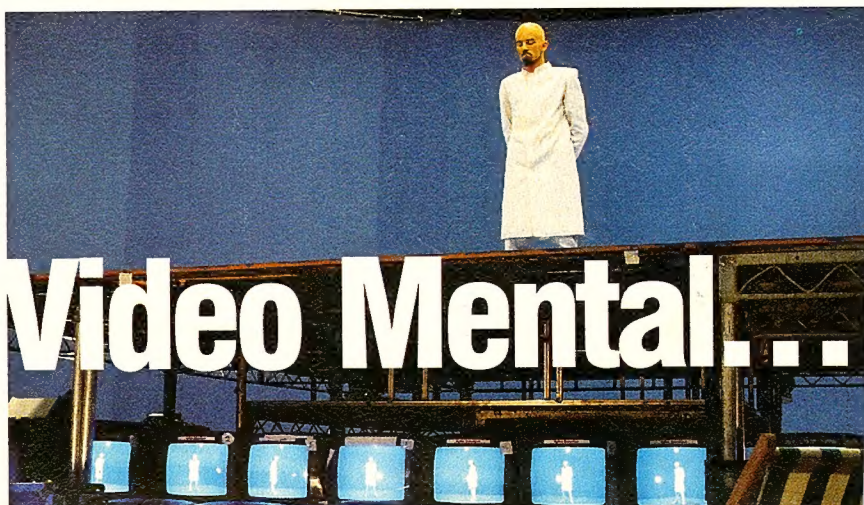
160 Film Stars



▲ News • page 34.



▲ Surf • page 150.



TS

Highlights

34

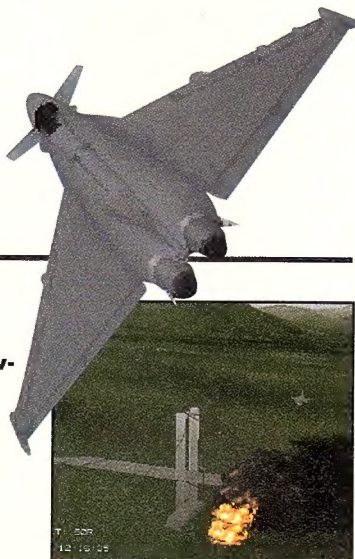
ECTS report

The European Computer Trade Show is the ideal venue to discover what's going to be hot in the world of games and multimedia. We pass our findings on to you.

72

TFX: EF2000

Possibly the best combat flight simulation you'll ever see is reviewed here in this very issue.



▲ TFX: EF2000 - page 72.

Tutorials

138

SMARTbook 4

Ian Howie, the man who knows everything about interactive push buttons, takes you skipping merri-ly through the more advanced aspects of SMARTbook 4 (the utility we gave away on last month's cover CD).

141

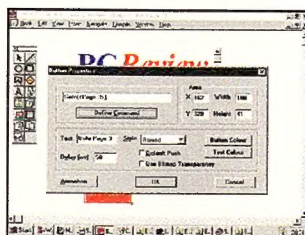
Ascend

This is part two of our personally organised tutorial showing you how to personally organise your personal organiser (given away on the CD of issue 47)

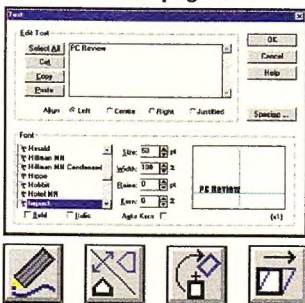
142

Design Works

Also in its second part, the useful drawing package gets even more of a good going over by Pat Fox and his gang of hardened gang-land criminals.



▲ SMARTbook - page 138.



▲ Design Works - page 142.

Coverdisks

16

Coverdisks

Although we always bring you the best in entertainment on the cover CD, this month we have a very special treat in an exclusive Stonekeep demo shape — true role-playing at its very best. Also its Doom-alike-a-go-go, in the shape of both Witchhaven and William Shatner's Tek War.



GAMES

PREVIEWS

- 60 Dungeon Keeper
- 62 Mortal Coil
- 65 Mortal Kombat 3
- 66 Hexen

REVIEWS

- 72 TFX: EF2000
- 76 Fatal Racing
- 78 Phantasmagoria
- 80 Fade To Black
- 82 Need For Speed
- 87 Battle Beasts
- 89 Darker
- 91 Pitfall (for Windows 95)
- 93 Primal Rage
- 94 Thunderscape
- 95 Pinball Illusions
- 97 AI Unser Jnr. Arcade Racing
- Mordor: The Depths Of Dejenol
- 98 Jungle Book
- The Skins Game At Bighorn

SHORT REVIEWS

- 99 Triazzle
- Under Pressure
- Pressure Drop
- Day Of The Tentacle

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

REVIEWS

- 124 MESH Junior PC
- Iomega Zip Drive
- 126 Pace Microlin FX34 Pocket
- LASAT Safire 28.8
- Volante VossNet V.34 Fax/Modem
- Multitech 288ZDXK
- Hayes Accura 28.8 + Fax
- Electronic Frontier XL288E
- 128 MS Office 95
- 131 Professional CV Writer
- Gamestar
- 133 OfficeBlox
- SmartPad
- 135 STYLE Writer
- Win '95 Advisor
- 136 CorelDRAW 6

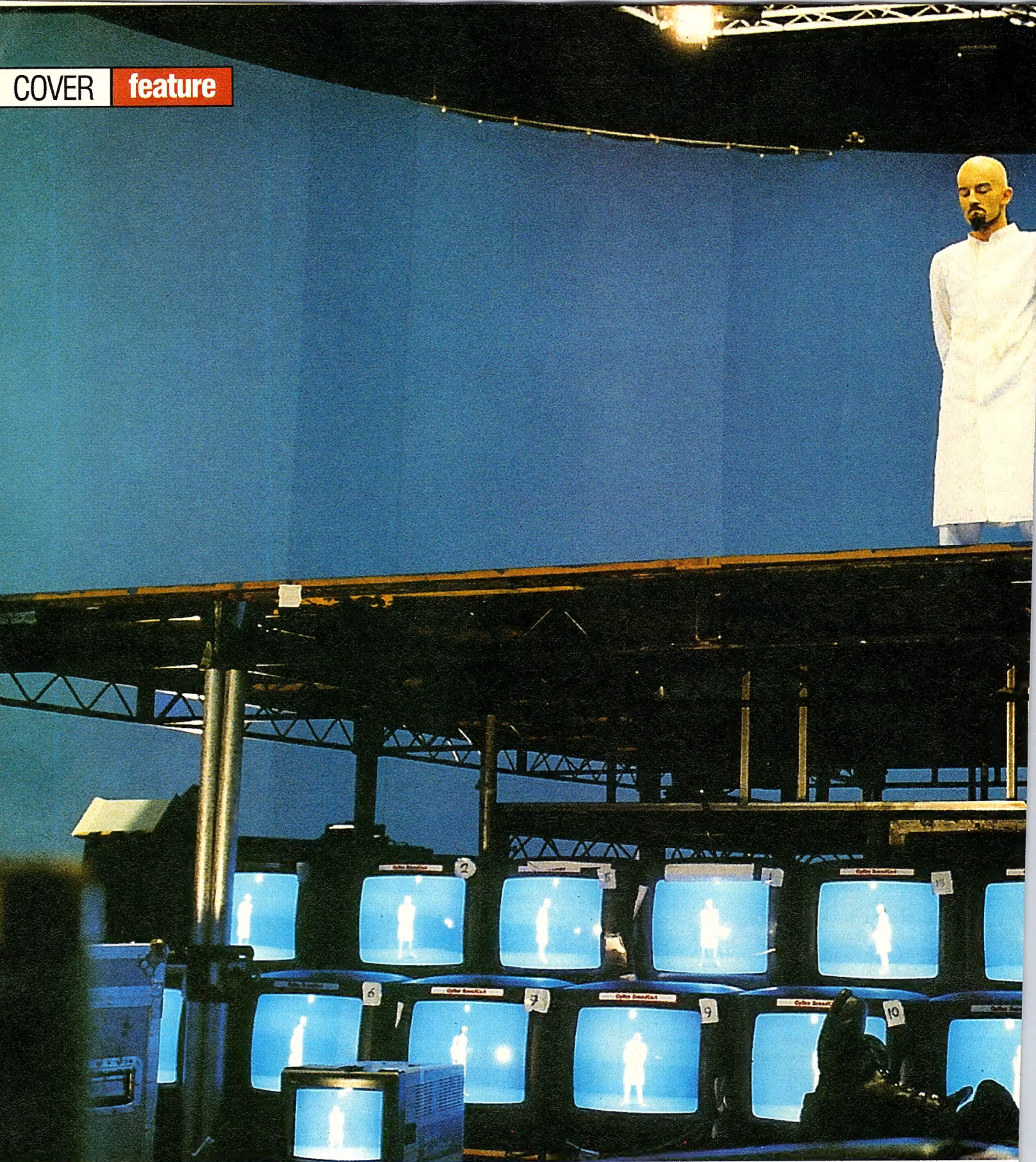
MULTIMEDIA

REVIEWS

- 110 Julia Child Home Cooking
- 113 Star Trek Omnimedia
- 115 Van Gogh
- 116 Days Of Rage
- 117 Apollo 13: A Race Against Time
- 118 Nile: Passage To Egypt


SHORT REVIEWS

- 119 3D Garden Designer 2
- Young Scientist
- The Fish Who Could Wish
- Christmas Story



▲ Each camera has its own screen for the director's use, and they all have a different viewpoint of the man on stage.

Video



Film without tape and editing on the cheap. Rik Henderson takes the producer's seat and tells you how to make a film studio out of your PC.

Anyone can point a camcorder at a small child with a bucket on its head, then have a laugh every Christmas inflicting a showing on the family. But not everybody can turn their efforts into a professional piece of edited footage – no that honour only lends itself to those with bags of cash to book high quality editing suites... Or people with a PC.

Digital editing is not new, in fact it's been around for some time. At first the equipment required to store digital video and manipulate it proved extortionately expensive even for the biggest television companies. And even when it did come down in price eventually, it was decided that the effect was certainly not broadcast quality (to be honest, it was just too crisp to look at), and the process was confined to first edits, and rough proofs.

Then suddenly the games industry started to explore the potential of using FMV (full motion video) in games, and this meant that not only was digital video a valid option, it was also an essential requirement. But we all know about the inept attempts at giving us an interactive movie – it certainly hasn't worked up 'til now (maybe Wing Commander III and Phantasmagoria are an exception to the rule). Philips, however, has made great strides in using a brand new cinematic technique that has neither been used in games before, or even in cinema itself.

Mental!!!

Continued over ►

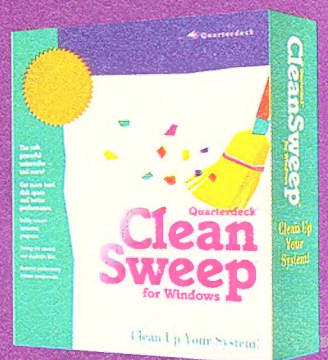
OVER FORTY MEGABYTES OF WINDOWS 95 WILL SOON LUMBER INTO YOUR HARD DISK.

MAKE ROOM.

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Video Nation

The new technique has been used in the game 'New Day' (previously referred to as 'Dwayne' – a cunning anagram) and it not only uses methods that will allow for a far better and far more interactive game than most, but when it was first conceived there was a mighty chorus of 'yeah-right'. But the filming of it has finished, and the game's graphical technique is testament to how the advent of digital video on PCs has made it all possible.

When I arrived at The Roundhouse in London's Camden Lock I couldn't really hope to expect what I was about to see. Erected in the centre of the building was a gigantic blue screen tube with 16 PCs running around a circular network on the outside. At its heart was a platform where the actors stand, and situated around the screen were lipstick cameras (which are about the size of a lipstick, hence the name). They were set into the walls and each was sending a feed into the PC directly below them.

This allows one shot to be filmed from 16 different viewpoints – creating as near as damn it a complete 3D character. And secondly, seeing as the information was being digitally grabbed instead of by tape, the middle man (the fellow who has to run all the tape stock through a digitiser) is well and truly cut-out.

The only problem with digital video is the amount of memory it takes to store even a couple of minutes of footage, let alone the 10 days' worth of filming that New Day required. In fact most of the time taken during filming was used to make back-ups of that day's work – the company hired a separate crew to work throughout the night doing exactly that.

The network itself had two rings running in opposite directions around the tube. This was because the network linking all the machines was not fast enough to ensure that all the cameras stopped and started together – so another

A World in Motion...

Although professional television and film companies are at present only just exploring the benefits of digital video, the biggest use of the medium and method is in the games industry. FMV (Full Motion Video) has been used for some time now, but unfortunately sometimes at the expense of gameplay. Here are a few examples of what's been done so far:

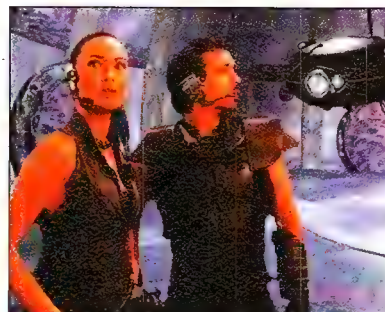
Wing Commander III

Take an ex-Star Wars stalwart, and place him in a slightly more dubious science fiction plot. Actually, that's a bit cruel really, because the FMV sections in Wing Commander III were well acted, and looked great. Not only that but they were only cut-aways and not roped in as part of the gameplay – which also stood up well on its own. This helped reinforce the argument that a wad of FMV on its own isn't enough to create a game. Here it was simply combined with existing gameplay to make one of the best CD-ROM products yet seen.



The Daedalus Encounter

This is a prime example of how not to incorporate digital video in a game. In fact, there was so little gameplay in the finished product (despite it coming on four CDs) that it was touted as an 'interactive cinematic experience' – for that read 'bobbins B-movie attempt'. Even Tia Carrere looked suspect in it.



er ring was set up to do just that. In fact, even the cameras themselves had to be hired from Toshiba directly. So the project was totally unique, not just for a computer game, but for filming in general. Dee-lite (the American dance combo) requested that the special set-up be maintained beyond New Day's filming

so they could use it for their next video – needless to say that it wasn't. And that illustrates that, with careful planning, digital video will soon replace tape – and with the price of PC technology plummeting rapidly, you can bet that games and FMV will not be the only ones who benefit.



NAKED VIDEO

David Bradwell casts his expert eye over the essential purchases for PC video enthusiasts.

CREATIVE LABS RT300

Video capture card

Although best known for its sound cards, Creative Labs has got a rather nifty range of other multimedia peripherals. The RT300 is a good choice for video capture. It has support for 30 frames per second capture in a window size of 320 x 240 pixels, and off-line compression can help you to reduce your file size, and so save disk space.

Intel's Indeo technology automatically adjusts the frame rate to the best your PC can muster – so once again you'd be better with a high spec Pentium, although if that's out of your range the card will compensate for running on a slower system. And that's not all, you can upgrade to the ShareVision desktop

video conferencing system at a later date, should you want to.

The card also comes bundled with a copy of Adobe's Premiere editing software, and while it's not the latest version, it should be enough to get you started and you can always upgrade if you find that it's a package which suits your needs.

Minimum PC: 33MHz 386 DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: 256 colour

Price: £240

Manufacturer: Creative Labs

Contact: (01734) 344322

Continued over ►

On the cutting

Rik Henderson, PC Review's very own media-tartlette, takes you through his guide to turning your home videos into major productions.

It's okay showing you that the professionals are now using digital editing to improve FMV, but we bet you'd rather find out the secret tips on how to make your video exploits more televisual. Well, in my time at Sky television (I just so happened to be a producer on the Sky One series Games World in my dim and distant past), I spent many a 9am 'til 9pm shift in a professional on-line editing suite, and to be honest most of the tricks used in there are possible to do using most of the editing packages available on the PC. So here's a quick guide to what editing techniques to use in any situation...

1. GENERAL TIPS

The first thing to remember is that you can spoil the overall product by trying too hard. Using too many flashy cuts and special effects will end up making your home video look like sweepings from a cutting room floor. Also, let's be honest, you're never going to try making The Ten Commandments. For a start even two and a half minutes of .AVI file will amount to around 13 meg of hard disk space (including sound, etc). So in a short space of time, it's really best to keep to one style of cut, preferably a simple, straight cut, throughout, and any effects should be underplayed (allowing the viewers to keep their eyes on the main action, which is what counts).

2. CUT-AWAYS

Most people, when they film their home videos, don't realise the benefits of filming cut-away sequences. A cut-away sequence can be absolutely anything you think will work (David Lynch's Wild At Heart featured close-ups of a cigarette burning to link scenes) but

generally it will be a piece of footage refilmed from a different angle and then cut into the same section of the film to give the illusion of multiple cameras. Even if you're only filming young Billy's birthday, it's worth getting him to blow out the candles twice, just to get it from two different angles so that you can cut between them. Not only that, but cut-aways can also hide embarrassing out-takes (the ones you should send to You've Been Framed) and keep the footage moving along.



▲ As you can see, when Mr. Carey was grabbed his colour has gone funny...



▲ ...So if you drop all the colour out, and turn it B&W, he looks more defined.

3. SPECIAL EFFECTS

Let's face it, Hi-8 and Super VHS formats, though improving rapidly, are hardly TV broadcast quality, but with the cunning use of some simple special effects, you can turn your poorly lit, washed-out colour footage into a Bon Jovi music video... almost, anyway.

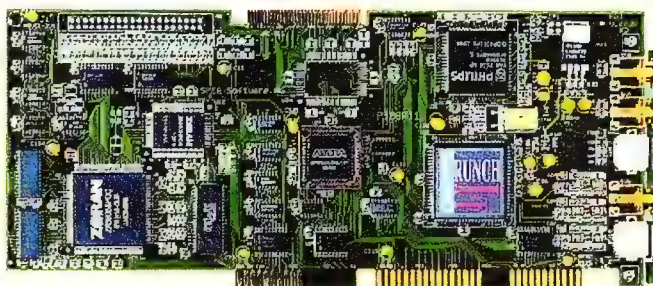
If the colours on your footage look really ropy, there's an easy solution — turn it all black and white. There is little or no difference in quality between TV's betacam format turned black and white, and camcorder film treated the same way.

One technique that helps to a) increase the length of time that the footage lasts for, and b) make a boring non-speaking section seem more interesting, is to either slow down the action or speed it up. For instance, if you have followed someone around a footpath, speed up the action, nobody wants to watch a complete route of Hampstead Heath in real-time. Or say you've recorded your Sunday League football team's last match, slow down the action at key points — like a goal or a fantastic save.

Fast Cuts and White Flashes

Most pop videos roll along at a healthy, set pace, and sometimes, even if it's your daughter's wedding, you should introduce sections of quick 5-10 frame snaps cut one after the other just to give the action some kind of urgency. It also stops your video looking like everyone else's. Also during these sections, instead of a normal straight-forward cut, try inserting a white flash (this is nothing more than a frame or two of a totally white screen). This will make the section look like a collection

SPEA CRUNCH IT Video capture card



▲ With a good compression ratio and plenty of bundled software, the Crunch It card is a good one for novices.

German graphics card specialist Spea recently entered the video capture market with Crunch It. PC permitting, the card lets you view images at 25 frames per second in full-frame windows (768 x 576 pixels), down to quarter size (320 x 240 pixels).

The card fits into any ISA slot and comes with Video Maestro and PixelShrink for video editing, as well as a menu-driven installation program, configuration utilities, drivers

for Windows, and Video for Windows.

The compression ratio goes from 1:5 to 1:100 with no reduction in resolution, and the card will compress in real time as you perform the capture. It also has Spea's proprietary Movie Bus for transferring video data to the company's multimedia graphics cards: Showtime Plus and Play It.

Minimum PC: 486

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: 256 colour

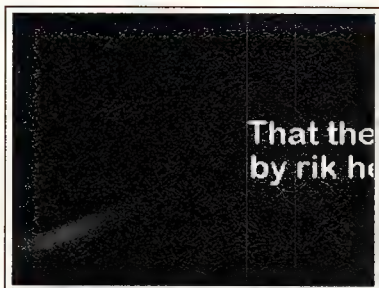
Price: £325

Manufacturer: Spea

Contact: (01844) 261886

room floor...

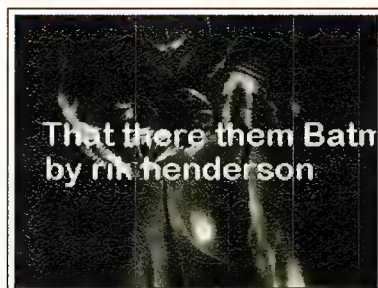
HOW DO YOU GET ON LINE?



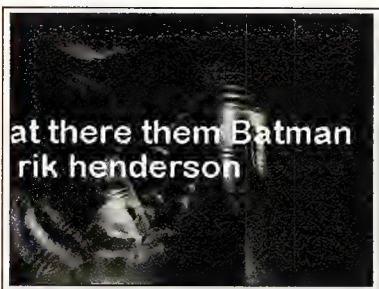
▲ Using both a variety of cutting techniques and text overlay...



▲ ...you can move it across the screen to give it a dramatic opening.



▲ The phrases I've used are not strictly true, but it illustrates...



▲ ...the effect I'm after. Most editing packages such as...



▲ ...Asymetrix DVP will create this text overlay quite easily...



▲ ...If combined with a paint package, like Paint Shop Pro.

of Polaroid photographs (especially if you add a 'clicking' sound-effect at this point).

4. MUSIC

When you've finally finished the edit, unless you're putting together a pop video, you should try to be fairly sparing with the background music. Don't drown out any dialogue. If you are putting a music promo together, lay down the music first, and then cut the pictures on top so that you can use effects at the right times (use the beats in the drum pattern to determine cuts).

5. TEXT

Text is a very important function to utilise if you want to make your production look professional. The best thing to do is not just slap it on top. This will detract from the action and look awful. Be more artistic and imaginative. Have it move around the screen, use drop shadows, even put different footage running inside the confines of the text letters. In fact, it's the only time when you can really go to town without worrying about the technical aspects of getting shots into focus of kids pulling faces.

6. AND FINALLY...

Don't forget, whatever you do with your editing techniques make them fun. But always remember to think of the people who will be viewing your efforts, don't use fast cuts and rock music if your footage is of Auntie Nell's funeral. And the more techniques you use, the less people will see the errors in the filming – most home videos are memories captured on tape for life – at least with the PC you can make them that much more enjoyable for people that don't quite share your enthusiasm for the subject matter.

ADOBE PREMIERE

Video editing software



▲ Adobe Premiere is one of the best systems around. Naturally this makes it one of the most expensive.

If you want the ultimate in PC video editing software, look no further than Premiere. As well as letting you capture and edit your own video clips, it offers a whole host of special effects that you'll only have previously seen on the telly. For example, you can fly any still or moving image along a path with twisting, zooming, rotation and distortion effects.

For starters you can have 99 separate video and audio tracks which can be mixed together. You can also add captions and titles complete with gradient fills, soft shadows, and transparent backgrounds.

The CD-ROM version of Premiere also contains impressive multimedia tutorials, stock images, video and audio clips, and a limited feature version of Adobe's Photoshop image

editing software. It's one of the best, if not the best, system around, but like everything else that comes out tops, you're going to have to pay through the nose for it. So if you're not so bothered by features, especially if you just creating stuff for yourself or friends, you're probably a lot better off with a cheaper, more basic video capture system.

Minimum PC: 486

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: 256 colour

Price: £550

Manufacturer: Adobe

Contact: (0181) 6064000

Continued over ►

That's a wrap...

You know what to do and how to do, so here's David Bradwell with the hardware you'll need to become the next Quentin Tarantino.

MEMORY

If you're serious about video production you'll need a lot of RAM. Eight megabytes is a sensible minimum for all Windows applications, but because video files are so large you'll ideally need at least 16Mb. That way you can capture video at a higher resolution, and there'll be far less hard disk activity to slow your system down. RAM costs about £35 per megabyte, but it's worth it. Call Silica on (0181) 309 1111.

HARD DRIVE

With a minute of video occupying a scary amount of disk space, even when reduced to a small window size and compressed, a big hard disk is essential. You can pick up an additional 500Mb IDE hard drive for around £200, but for top quality results, speed is of the essence. Audio/visual SCSI drives are the fastest, and they start at around £799 for 2Gb from Micropolis. Call (01734) 751315.

CAMCORDER/VCR

Walk into any high street electronics store and you'll be bewildered at the choice of camcorders and video cassette recorders.

There are dozens of brand names to choose from, and prices to match any range of specifications from basic to semi-professional. Camcorders start at around £400 for VHS-C or 8mm machines, while the better quality Hi-8 models are £600 or above. VCRs range from about £140-600, but if you want NICAM stereo sound

you'll need to pay about £300 upwards. Call your local branch of Currys for details.

GRAPHICS CARD

When it comes to editing and playback, video places an enormous strain on all parts of your system, but especially your graphics card. Fast cards are now increasingly affordable, and there are dozens to choose from. And even if you're only planning the occasional foray into video, a new card is a worthwhile investment as it will also speed up all your other Windows applications. Make sure you get the right card for your system — ISA, VESA or PCI. Some cards are available for all formats and at £105, the Cirrus Logic Alpine PCI card is worth a look. Call Cirrus Logic on (01734) 810011.

CAPTURE CARD

The capture card will be at the heart of your video system, so it's important that you get one that's right for you and

you want to do. It's the card which takes the input from your camcorder or VCR and turns it into an editable computer file. More expensive cards can capture at a higher resolution and at a faster frame rate, but you'll need a suitably powerful PC to match, so if you don't want to spend too much you'll have to make do with a fairly standard system. Down at the budget end, the Creative Labs RT300 seems a good buy at £240, it's powerful and performs very well. Call Creative on (01734) 344322. Look out for decent bundled editing software with it as well, otherwise you'll end up paying out even more money as your software doesn't take advantage of the card..

MOTHERBOARD

The motherboard is like a bus terminus. All the components of your PC will be linked to it, and it's the hub for all data communications. If you've got an older machine you may well have an ISA motherboard, and that will struggle to meet the demands of video. VESA is better, while PCI is the best, although you'll pay more for the privilege. Upgrades start at £100. Call Silica on (0181) 309 1111.

PROCESSOR

Serious video requires a serious processor. You'll need at least a DX2/66, but a Pentium will be even better. The good news is that you don't necessarily need a new PC to benefit from a faster processor. Overdrive chips are available to boost existing machines from around £200. But in the long run you'll be much better off with a faster-spec PC or simply buying a Pentium motherboard and processor. Call Silica on (0181) 309 1111.



GOLD DISK VIDEODIRECTOR HOME

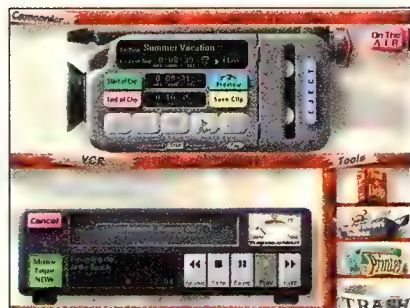
Video editing software

If you've got a camcorder and you just want to sort out your holiday tapes into something

more watchable, look no further than VideoDirector Home. You don't need a capture card, or any other high-end hardware associated with PC video, but you can still obtain good results. The software comes with a

SmartCable which lets you control your camcorder and VCR from your computer.

Any camcorder with an infra-red remote control or LANC socket can be used as the source deck, and any VCR with an infra-red remote control can be used as the record deck. Then it's a matter of simply marking, editing and copying.



No board required.
This useful package simply needs a camcorder and a VCR to get going. ▶

Minimum PC: 486

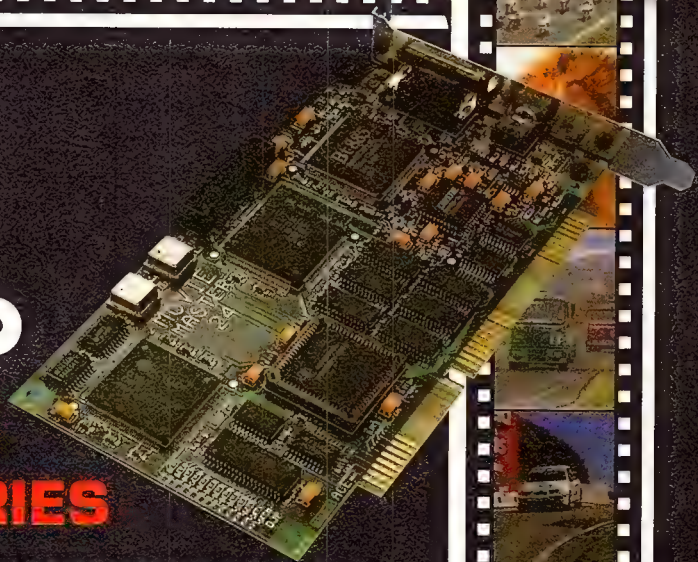
Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: 256 colour

Price: £49.95

Manufacturer: Gold Disk

Contact: (01734) 814230



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Stonekeep

Interplay (01235) 821666 • CD

Full of monsters, spells, exploration, and stunning 3D graphics Stonekeep is the ultimate in role play games. So take a step into the unknown, into a dark dangerous world, into a city that is Stonekeep...



Contents

Disk and CD-ROM

Hurl.....	30
Worms.....	19

CD-ROM only

3-D Ware.....	24
Ascendancy.....	29
Countdown.....	20
Cybermage.....	22
C++.....	24
Entomorph.....	20
Fatal Racing.....	26
Magic Carpet 2.....	22
Mech Warrior 2.....	26
Mission Critical.....	22
Mortal Kombat 3.....	22
Multimedia System 3.....	25
Office '95.....	20
Pole Position.....	29
Rednex.....	29
Sim Isle.....	20
Shareware.....	30
Stonekeep.....	16
Tek War.....	26
The Dig.....	29
Wetlands.....	19
Windows '95 Report.....	20
Witchaven.....	19

To run select 'Stonekeep' from the CD-ROM's main menu. Now an information screen will appear click on the quit button to start installing the game onto your hard disc. Windows users will have to quit to DOS to run Stonekeep. When ever you play this demo please ensure that the CD-ROM is in your drive even.

Stonekeep is to be released in November after being 'in progress' for over seven years. Just to prove PC Review really does bring you 'the best in entertainment' this month's CD-ROM has an exclusive demo! The demo features the complete first level of this thirteen level epic. Our rival publications are very jealous, for Stonekeep is widely regarded as one of the finest role playing games ever.

You play Drake on his quest to bring the city of Stonekeep back from the forces of darkness. In order to do this you must collect nine magic orbs (well it makes a change from rings). Just like Doom the interface is first person



The Law of the Dungeon

The interface

Stonekeep's interface is very intuitive. Use the cursor keys to move around the screen and perform actions with the mouse. The game uses a dynamic cursor i.e. it changes according to the type of action you can perform. So if you pass over an essential item on the dungeon's floor the cursor will change to a hand indicating you should pick it up. No more wandering around examining every bit of furniture to see what secrets they hide.

Inventory Panel

You'll find the inventory panel on the right hand corner of the screen. To access it either click on the right mouse button or move the cursor to the right hand side of the screen and click on the mirror icon which appears. The inventory panel includes a scroll icon in which you collect items and a mirror icon so you can see how you're doing.

The Journal

It's the single most important object in the game so pick it up ASAP. Your journal contains automaps of the dungeon, your status, and information on items you have collected. It also contains a complete list of spells and how to use them. Its most useful



▲ Your passport to spell casting is the runes. You will also need a runecaster (above) looks a bit like a baseball bat. Choose a set of runes and paste them on the runecaster. To cast a spell swing the runecaster. Wave the runecaster again to repeat the last spell.

feature is the ability to write your own notes on any of the pages. The journal is pretty easy to find, but be warned it's guarded.

To move between pages in the journal just click on the edge of a page. To add notes just click where you want to place the text and type the message.

Runes

In Stonekeep you will need to use lots of magic. Spells are found on runes scattered around the dungeons. In addition to spells you must collect nine orbs. These give you magical powers when found and used. Well, it's better than bludgeoning orcs with a large stick.

BEFORE YOU START: SORT OUT THOSE NASTY MEMORY PROBLEMS

PC's are funny things, for instance a memory problem can look like a disc problem, so we recommend that you configure your memory before you run this month's disc. To see how much memory you have type MEM at the DOS prompt. If the figure beside the line 'largest executable program size' is less than 550K your system is not set up correctly. The easiest way to reconfigure your memory is to use the Memmaker program. From the DOS prompt type MEMMAKER. The introduction screen will now appear, press the ENTER key. On the next screen select the CUSTOM SETUP option by pressing the SPACEBAR. On the next page make sure the answer to the option 'Do you wish to use any programs that need expanded memory' is 'No' and press the ENTER key. On the next page there are six options and these should be answered as follows:

Option	Answer
1. Specify which drivers and TSR's to include in optimisation?	No
2. Scan the upper memory aggressively?	Yes
3. Optimise upper memory for use with Windows?	No
4. Use monochrome region (B000 - B7FF) for running programs? (unless you have a mono monitor)	Yes
5. Keep current EMM386 memory exclusions and inclusions?	No
6. More extended BIOS data area from conventional to upper memory?	Yes

Follow the rest of the on-screen instructions, and Memmaker will reboot your system with your memory correctly configured.



perspective game so you can fully interact in everything Drake does.

Interplay has employed special effects that would make Hollywood proud to revolutionise the role-playing genre. The 3D rendered dungeons play host to unspeakable terrors and creatures that will make your skin crawl (especially if you don't like spiders).

On your travels you'll have the chance to recruit up to seven characters to join you. You'll then become leader, but be warned, your band may not like everything you say. You will not see very much of your party however unless look your mirror in the inventory. The reason behind this is to keep the screen as uncluttered and intuitive as possible.

Stonekeep's graphics and special effects will astound non role-playing gamers, while its puzzles and game play will have role-play heads glued. So what are you doing reading this, get in that dungeon now and discover what an amazing gaming experience Stonekeep is.



Looks like a real ugly dude!

Made in Stone ...

There are over 70 monsters in Stonekeep. These include gruesome giant insects, fire-breathing dragons, a skeleton called Lucy and even a Jim Gillies look-a-like.



▲ The evil dictator.



▲ Bad breath or what?



▲ All dressed up for a knight on the town.



▲ This three headed monster is in two minds about everything.



Requires: 486DX2 66Mhz, 8Mb RAM, Sound Blaster and VGA.

7 Years, 1 Month, and 8 Days in the life ...

October 1988 0 First discussions begin on a program simply called the dungeon game.

November 1991 3 Years 1 Month The team begin experimenting with Strata vision, a 3-D rendering program

January 1992 3 Years 3 Months The first 3-D rendered dungeon is completed. It's a milestone in the use of 3-D modelling for computer entertainment.

February 1993 4 Years 4 Months The first disaster strikes. Months of outdoor filming is found to be unusable for the 3-D computer environment. Five months of work must be re-done indoors.

April 1993 4 Years 6 Months Disaster strikes again when the programmers begin integrating the animation's with the new live video. The footage looks grainy and cartoony in comparison to the computer environment.

May 1993 4 Years 7 Months Filming

commences again, this time using a state-of-art Beta Cam video system. The results are spectacular.

August 1993 4 Years 10 Months With the filming set backs, the time consuming editing of the digitised material and the enormous task of programming the game is pushed back to mid-1994.

March 1994 5 Years 5 Months CD-ROM begins to change computer entertainment drastically. With the program taking up over 11 disks decision is made to move Stonekeep from floppy disc to CD-ROM. The additional filming, voice recording, movie sequences and programming requirements are planned and the goal of Christmas 1994 is set.

October 1994 6 Years The pressure and frustration of the set-backs and reworking take their toll. The lead programmer leaves the project as do several of the team's artists. A revaluation

of the game reveals that the CD-ROM additions are bigger than the original game and months will be needed to integrate the two.

January 1995 6 Years 3 Months The first glimpse of Stonekeep in its entirety is seen. The long process of testing, script fine-tuning, debugging and optimisation begins.

July 25, 1995 6 Years 9 Months 25 Days The first three levels are pressed onto CD.

August 1, 1995 6 Years 10 Months Stonekeep day at Interplay. The launch is planned and a final build date is set

October 15, 1995 7 Years, 15 Days PC Review hits the shops with a copy of the Stonekeep demo. Finally you can see and experience the epic fantasy adventure that has been seven Years in the making.

November 8, 1995 7 Years, 1 Month, 8 Days Stonekeep goes on sale?

CD and Disk Loading Instructions

Please read these instructions carefully before you run this month's CD-ROM or floppy disks.

CD Loading In DOS

- 1) First insert your CD-ROM into the drive and wait for the light on the front of the drive to go out.
 - 2) Next, log on to the CD-ROM drive by typing its drive letter.
 - 3) Now type either PCR for the title screen or PCR2 to skip the title screen.
 - 4) The screen is laid out in boxes, each box contains a colour screenshot of the demo and the title of the game. Click on the next page and previous page buttons to move between the screens. To run a program click on the box you want and press the enter key.
 - 5) An information screen may now appear press the esc key to proceed with either installing or running the chosen program.
- N.B. If you have problems with the graphical menu try the text one, just add the letter T e.g PCR T or PCR2 T. In the text version you again use cursor keys to select the demo you want and press the enter key to run it.

In Windows 3.1 and Windows '95

- 1) Click on Go.bat (for the intro screen) or Go2.bat (for just the graphical menu).
- 2) Follow points 4 and 5 above.
- 3) Some of the programs may install to your hard disc using DOS. You may need to quit out of windows and go into DOS. For windows '95 users the easiest way to do this is to close the system down and reboot. When the 'Starting Windows '95' message appears press F8 and select the MS DOS option. If after this you find your CD-ROM drive does not work — don't panic as Window's '95 rems out drivers it does not like. To un-rem the CD-ROM driver line type 'edit config.sys' and delete any rems - Windows will clearly mark which lines it has tampered with. If still have problems ring the PCR Review disc hotline on (01451) 810788.

Floppy Disk Loading Dos only

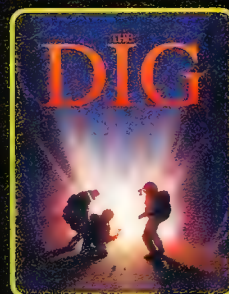
- 1) At the DOS a: prompt type PCR [and then press the Enter key].
- 2) Now simply follow the on-screen instructions.

From the makers of Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis™ comes a sci-fi adventure of epic proportions.
LucasArts Entertainment Company is proud to present

THE DIG

A team of astronauts is mysteriously transported to an alien world where they uncover fantastic artefacts of an ancient yet advanced civilisation. These vital ruins hold the key to their escape. Yet as they puzzle their way to freedom, the delicate balance of human nature is disturbed as greed and self preservation corrupt their desperate quest...

- > A DEEP SPACE ADVENTURE BY SEAN CLARK IN COLLABORATION WITH FILMMAKER STEVEN SPIELBERG
- > ORIGINAL AND COMPELLING STORY FROM LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY
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Y90* 01
9011101 0001
11101Y901.0Y 012Y9000Y 010
0Y*0E01.0101010. Y90*CCFG***
90*. CCFG*W0. 10Y*0E01.0101
FG***0E01 10*
010 0E01
110*00 00
10. 010* 1101
90*CCF 0. 01Y9*1
010Y90. 010*CCF01.11G*W. W0Y0
Y90.010*CCF01.11G*W010*0W0Y0
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CF. 0 10
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010 0E01
0Y901110 0Y90*CC
W010. 010*0W0Y0Y10. 1090*CC...
90. 010*0E010C*0E01. 010Y90. 0
1G*W010*0W0Y0Y10. 1090*CC...10
10Y*00. 10Y*0E01. 10
W0101Y90*... CCFG*
1.11G*W010*0W0Y0Y10...
0Y*0E010E010...
9... 00010101Y9
0Y90*CCF. G*W... 0YW010. 01Y9*
010*CCF01.11G*W010*0

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Wetlands

Rolling demo • U.S. Gold (0121) 606 1800 • CD

Take a deep breath...

To run select 'Wetlands' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Join John Cole, no not the ex-BBC news man, but a freelance "tracker"

Your mission is to capture an escaped madman who has the ability to destroy planets within the galaxy, but other than that he's really quite nice.

Wetlands is an animated adventure with blazing action right from the start.

Along the way, you will use a variety of vehicles, weapons and gadgets including futuristic cycles and submarines. So get your trigger finger ready as you'll be competing in deadly games of combat against villains, hover boats and attack bombers. If you're into deadly, fast-action, adventure gaming, dive into Wetlands!

Requires: 486 or greater, 8MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0 or greater, VGA and Double speed CD-ROM drive



Witchhaven

U.S. Gold (0121) 606 1800 • CD

No broomsticks or black cats here ...

To run select Witchhaven from the CD-ROM's main menu.

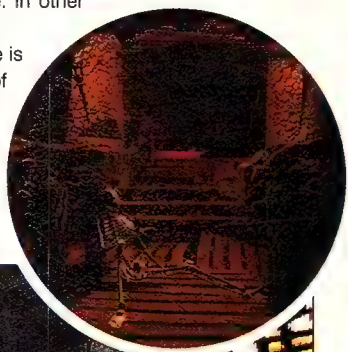
Witchhaven is the name of a new Doom-ish fantasy adventure. The demo on this month's CD-ROM features the entire first episode of the game.

So to the story ... The people on the island of Stazhia never really thought the legends were true. After all, witches are creatures of fairy tales. Their worries were much more practical, in particular, they feared that the volcano Char, on a nearby island of the same name, would someday erupt and destroy their world. Unfortunately the volcano has started rumbling and smoking and Stazhia has been evacuated. Char has become a desolate isle of pure evil, rife with the corrupting influence of a powerful group of witches.

The game takes place in a huge underground labyrinth known as the Witchaven. Little is known about the underground lair, but it is rumoured that deep within the Volcano, a demon of tremendous magical powers supplies the witches with their magical abilities in return for a human sacrifice. You have been chosen to enter the Witchaven and destroy the three witches. You're armed with the most powerful weapons and magic your people can provide. In other words very little.

Doom fans will be pleased to learn that there is plenty of blood to be let. A full arsenal of weapons has been scattered around the volcano for you to experiment with. However, it's not all gore as you will have to collect spells perform magic and solve puzzles.

Requires: 486DX 66Mhz, 8Mb RAM, sound card and a VGA display.



Worms

Team 17 (01924) 267776 • CD and disk

PC Review has worms, and it has nothing to do with intestinal infestations.

CD instructions: Select the shareware menu and press the enter key. Then select worms from the text sub-menu.

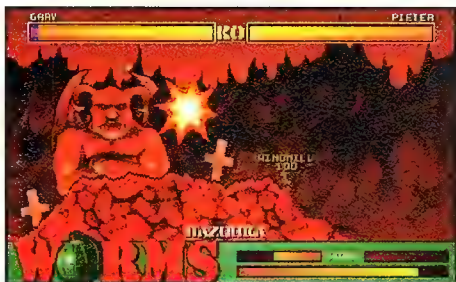
Disk instructions: At the a: DOS prompt type pcr and then press the enter key.

Worms comes across as a sort of Lemmings meets wargaming-type thing, with two teams of four warrior worms taking it in turns to battle it out over some rugged terrain with their arsenal of deadly weapons.

Your worm has a limited amount of time in which to move, then aim and fire its weapon. Use the left and right arrows to move, [Enter] to jump, and [Space] to fire.

Clicking the right mouse button will bring up a range of amusing and destructive weapons to choose from, but beware — if you're not careful you can blow up yourself or one of your teammates by accident!

Requires: 486PC, 4Mb RAM, VGA display and Soundblaster compatible card.



Entomorph: plague of the darkfall

Mindscape (01444) 246333 • CD

To run select 'entomorph' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

You play the role of Squire Warik a hero in a world that is going through a horrible transformation. It is the time of the Darkfall, an era where powerful evil is sweeping across this once peaceful land and transforming the people into horrible mutants. You must find the root of this horrible plague before it consumes you as well!

Controls

Walk by holding down the right button while moving the mouse. Interact with the world by walking up to an object or person and clicking with the left button. It will make you talk, attack, open doors, or pick up an object. Hand-to-hand combat is executed with the left-hand mouse button, and simply move to dodge the monster's blows.

Requires: 486DX 66MHz, 4Mb RAM, 600K Base Memory, VGA, sound card and a mouse.

Countdown

Media Communications (0181) 810 8383 • CD

To run select countdown from the CD-ROM's main menu. A text information screen appears press the esc key to install the game.

No, this is not a Thunderbirds shoot 'em up, but a puzzler based on the Channel Four TV series. You can compete against either the computer or a friend. For those who haven't seen the series there are three types of game. In the letters game you select nine letters and try to make the longest word possible. In the numbers game one player selects six numbers between one and one hundred. A target figure appears and you have to make the numbers add up to this. In the conundrum game you have to unscramble a nine letter word before the end of the countdown. It even has the ticking clock and everything.

Requires: 486, 4Mb RAM, and a VGA display.



▲ "The letters you've drawn are the following: S-A-D-L-O-S-E-R-S"

Windows '95 Compatibility Report

To run select Windows '95 compatibility report from the CD-ROM's main menu. As we all know by now, Windows '95 is not compatible with everything. This report helps by telling you what works and what doesn't. Take it as a rough guide, as people are finding compatibility problems and solutions all the time.

Requires: 386 PC and Windows 3.1 or greater.

Sim Isle

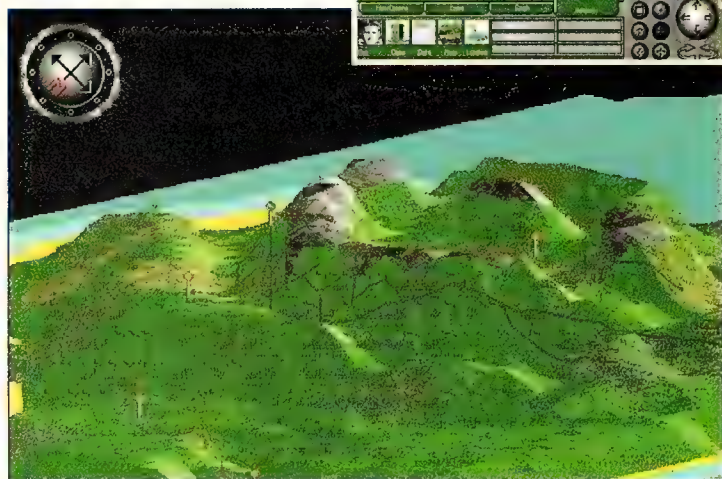
Maxis (0171) 490 2333 • CD

To run select Sim Isle from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Want to get away from it all? Sim Isle will take you to a tropical island paradise. Unfortunately you've got the job of running it. This involves discovering rare animals and ensuring their survival, whilst at the same time increasing the island's tourist trade. Luckily there is a team of experts at your disposal. Each one has their own unique abilities ranging from ecological to industrial expertise. If you employ their skills correctly you should be able to turn the island into a flourishing success.

Sim Isle may have a strong ecological slant, but remember that you'll need to get your economy up and running as well. This demo feature one of the 40 islands in the full game. So don those khaki sorts and get to work with your ecological hit squad.

Requires: 486PC, 8Mb, 610K base memory, 5Mb of hard disk space and a mouse.



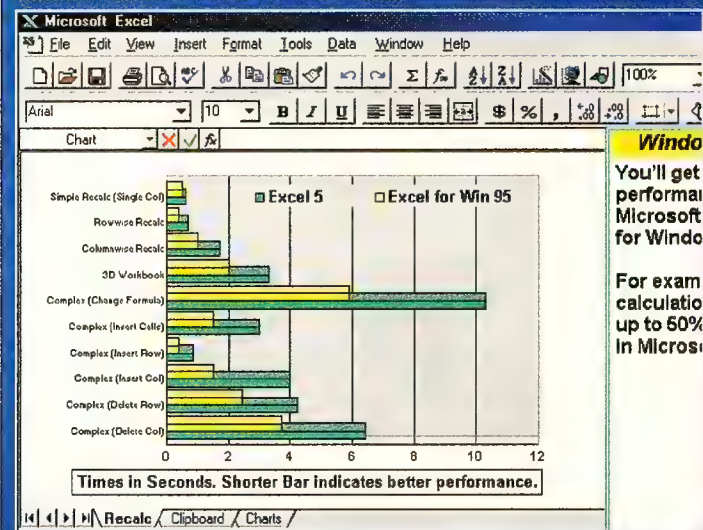
Office '95 demo

Microsoft (01734) 270001 • CD

To run select Office '95 from the CD-ROM's main menu.

So, this Microsoft Office '95 then? This is the official rolling demo which goes through what's cool, hip and new about the latest version of Microsoft's top utilities package.

Requires: 486PC, windows, and VGA display.

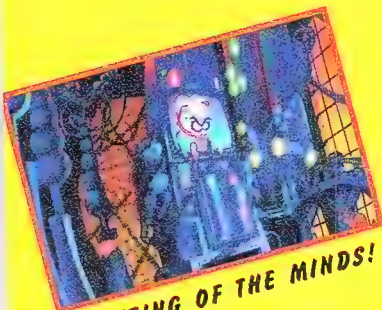


Windo
You'll get
performa
Microsoft
for Windo

For exam
calculatio
up to 60%
in Micros

GET THE GAME OR THE SHORT,
FAT, GREEN GUY
BUYS IT!

BRAIN DEAD



MEETING OF THE MINDS!



SUSPENSE, DRAMA,
INTRIGUE!



SHOCKING!



AWESOME ANIMATION!



THE LADY IS A VAMP!

PC CDROM

ODGE HOOKS, EVADE THE ALWAYS WELL
RMED **FRITZ**, AND HUNT DOWN THE EVIL DR.
ERO NEUROSIS AS YOU RACE THROUGH HIS
WISTED CASTLE, BUT ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE
UT OR THIS EXPLOSIVELY INTERACTIVE
XPERIENCE WILL BLOW YOUR MIND!

WARNING:
Extreme Cartoon Violence!

No cartoon characters were maimed or
mutilated during the making of this game.

empire
INTERACTIVE

READYSOFT

Cybermage



Origin/EA (01753) 549442 • CD

To run select "Cybermage" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Cybermage is a bit of a Doom 'em up, but there's more to it than simply Doom with a few go-faster stripes. You can control tanks and hover bikes as well as blowing the bad guys into splats of entrails and the graphics are pretty ambitious. It's a more complex on the control front too, so here's the basic guide.

KEYS

Movement	Cursor keys or mouse.
Fire	Space bar.
Open doors/Activate switches	Cntrl + Enter
Enter vehicles	Cntrl + Enter.
Jump	Cntrl + Up arrow.
Map on	M.
Access inventory	F3
Help	?

Requires: 486 66mhz, 8Mb RAM, VGA, and a Sound Blaster or compatible card.

Ascendancy

Virgin (0171) 3682255 • CD

To run select "Ascendancy" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Probably the best description of Ascendancy is "Colonisation" in space, but that's a rough description. A very rough description. You can choose between 21 unique alien races, conquer or colonise at least half the galaxy and discover some very cool gadgets. It's one of the best-looking games this year (pretty damn playable too) and our rolling demo should provide a mouth watering taste of what you can expect when it's released in October. If you're still hungry for more, see our Ascendancy preview in the last issue.

Requires: DX2 66, 8Mb RAM, and a Sound Blaster or compatible card.



▲ This is my intergalactic empire. What do you think of it?

Magic Carpet 2

EA/Bullfrog (01753) 549 442 • CD

Oh no! Not more legs! I'm starting to develop a phobia now. ▼

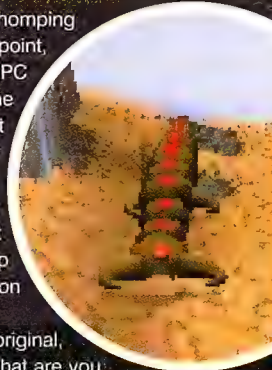
To run select "Magic Carpet 2" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Even since Magic Carpet appeared we've been chomping at the bit for a sequel and Bullfrog didn't disappoint, with Magic Carpet 2 garnering the coveted "PC Review Recommended" in our last issue. In the interests of fairness we thought it only right that you should get a crack at it too, and what better way to do it than a demo on the cover disk?

Once you start the demo there are five icons along the bottom of the screen. Click the furthest left to start the interactive demo, the next is for help and the next two are rolling demos. The right icon exits.

Basic control is with the mouse and, like the original, you can assign a spell to each mouse button. What are you waiting for? Beat it!

Requires: 50mhz 486, 8Mb RAM, 5Mb of Hard Disk, SVGA, Sound Blaster or compatible.



Too many legs. Far too many legs.

Mortal Kombat 3

GT Interactive (0171) 258 3856 • CD

To run select "Mortal Kombat 3" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Well, it's Mortal Kombat 3, init? What more can we say? Except perhaps, "there's even a Mortal Kombat film now and it's actually quite good". Still, if you weren't actually able to be in the film (not being a major Hollywood star and all) you can at least try out one of the best beat 'em ups around.

You can play as Jaxx or Sheeva (a babe with more arms than is strictly regulation and a most impressive special move which involves jumping on people's heads from a great height) and it's two player so you can humiliate one of your friends too. The screen shots don't really do it justice, so you better boot it up, post haste.

Requires: 486DX 33, 4Mb RAM, 20Mb Hard Disk, Sound Blaster or compatible.

keys

	PLAYER 1	PLAYER 2
High Punch	Insert	J
Low Punch	Delete	M
Block	End	P
High Kick	Page Up	H
Low Kick	Page Down	N
Run	Home	I

And if they don't suit you define your own.



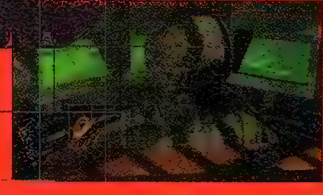
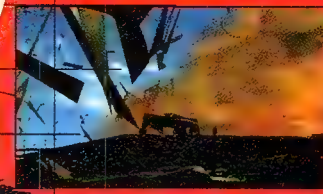
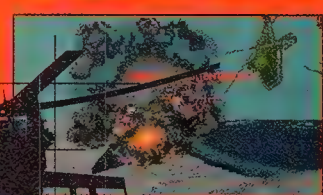
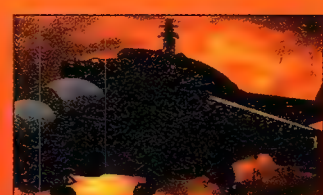
▲ Obviously no one ever showed Jaxx the right way to treat a lady. She loves it really.



▲ Bloody hell! My flat's at the top of that building and it looks like my kitchen's on fire.

RED

150H



Red ghost is a superb audio visual experience

that combines the best elements of action

strategy and simulation in one explosive game

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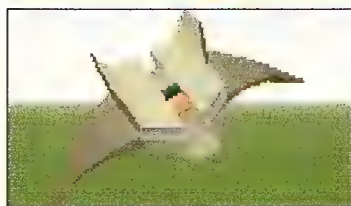
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3D-Ware

**OVER
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Think of the best games you've played recently, not just on a PC but also on a console or in the arcades. The chances are that most of them will have been 3D. That's because 3D graphics have ushered a whole new level of realism to the gaming world.

Just think about the differences between the old Atari road racer Pole Position and today's graphically-absorbing road huggers: Screamer, Ridge Racer, Sega Rally and Fatal Racing. The atmosphere and excitement you feel in the differences in car handling as it judders at every bump, power-slides around corners, and slams into oppos-



3D-Ware is a fully featured suite of tools (worth over £115) which will let you create stunning, near-arcade quality 3D games or graphics. And it's yours to keep.



ing cars is electric. The effect is amazing, and it's all thanks to the awesome 3D graphics used in such games.

Creating such games, however, is generally thought to be beyond the scope of mere mortals such as ourselves. Most of the time it seems as though you need a degree in computing science, artistic talent

and more than a little patience. But once you get to grips with this month's exclusive cover disc you may well beg to differ. Because with 3D-Ware it's your chance to create your own 3D games on your PC.

But what is 3D-Ware?

3D-Ware is a suite of graphics tools that will let you build your own 3D worlds and objects, be they cars hurtling round a race track, fighters slugging it out in a ring, tanks on a battle field, or battle ships pounding each other in a 3D Water World.

With the tools in this very neat package you can create the models, scenery, and objects for your game world, using simple to master concepts and ultimately creating a look very similar to that of Sega's land-mark Virtua series of games. The program is easy to use and works by letting you build up the shapes you need from lots of polygons. Each polygon can then be coloured to add depth, realism and feel. When it comes to manipulating the shapes the computer then just needs to change the size and position of the polygons to move an object or change the view point.

▲ **Virtua Cop uses fairly simple flat-shaded polygons to great effect.**

▲ **This is the birds demo which comes with 3D-Ware**

In fact, to see just what 3D-Ware is capable of, why not try this easy trick. Install the utility from this month's cover CD and at the MS-DOS prompt type in the following:

CD c:\virtek\dos\demos

Now press Enter and type in:

BIRDS

Follow this with Enter. This will show a Blue cloudy sky with a flock of birds flying around. Each bird is built from a set of separate polygons and all are independently controlled. The real power of 3D-Ware can be seen when you move closer to the flock — done by moving the vertical slider on the right hand side

C For Yourself

A C tutorial would fill this entire magazine, but we know you're just itching to try it out. Until next month here's a quick program you can try. From the MS-DOS prompt type 'CD c:\tclite\bin' followed by Return. Now type 'tc' and Return. Borland's C++ system will now load, to try it out type in these lines.

```
Main()
{
    printf("Hello World\n\n");
}
```

Select the Run menu and click on the RUN option. The program will now compile and execute. You'll see the screen clear and change to show your message, the screen will then go back to the Turbo C++ screen. Click on the Window menu and 'User Screen' to see the message for longer.

downwards, and increasing the number of birds (this time using the horizontal slider and moving it to the right). Try moving the sliders around changing the viewing point and number of birds. To exit the demo click on the Quit button in the bottom right hand corner.

3D Motors

Another demo can be found by running the program Shedit. This shows four windows each with a Formula One car in it. Click on the first window and then on the number in the top corner. A menu will now drop down. Click on the Horizon option and select Faded, now select the menu again, this time click on the Spin option. You'll now see a green base appear, and the car will start spinning around it. Do the same with the other three windows. Even on a 486 you should see all four cars spinning in three dimensions without slowing down, thanks to 3D-Ware.

Installed with 3D-Ware is a comprehensive on-line manual, this will show you how to use the various utilities that make up the 3D-Ware suite of programs. To see this load up Windows and the File Manager. Now double click on the file acread.doc in the manual folder, this will install a viewing program for the

Hardware Needed

The 3D-Ware tools will work on a 386 based PC, even the 3D worlds produced can be displayed and manipulated on 386 PCs. To use the on-line manual you'll need a PC running Microsoft Windows.

manual and restart your system. Now reload the File Manager, but this time double clicking on the file 'manual.pdf' in the \virtek\dos\manual folder. Don't worry if you find much of it confusing, we'll be running in-depth tutorials over the next couple of months which will cover all the aspects of this powerful and flexible group of programs.

Once you've created your world, the program generates the programming code needed to display and manipulate your creations. Then all you have to do is incorporate this code into your own game programming and hasta la vista baby, your game is ready. Experienced programmers will by now be thinking 'ha, they think it's that easy!'. Well creating 3D games with 3D-Ware is a lot, lot, easier than hand crafting the game graphics yourself, but you will still need to write the game logic (not so simple) and for this

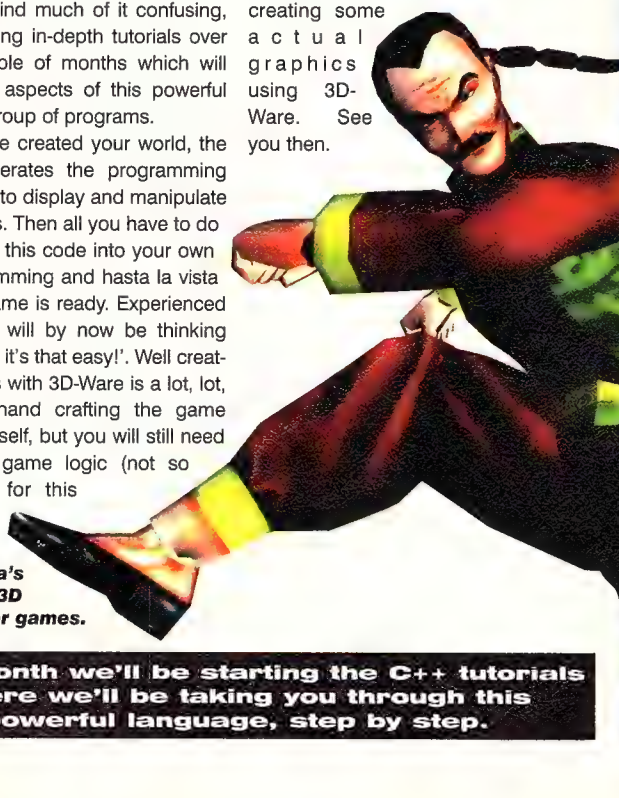
This is Lau, one of the stars of Sega's remarkable 3D Virtua Fighter games.

Upgrade to texture mapped glory!

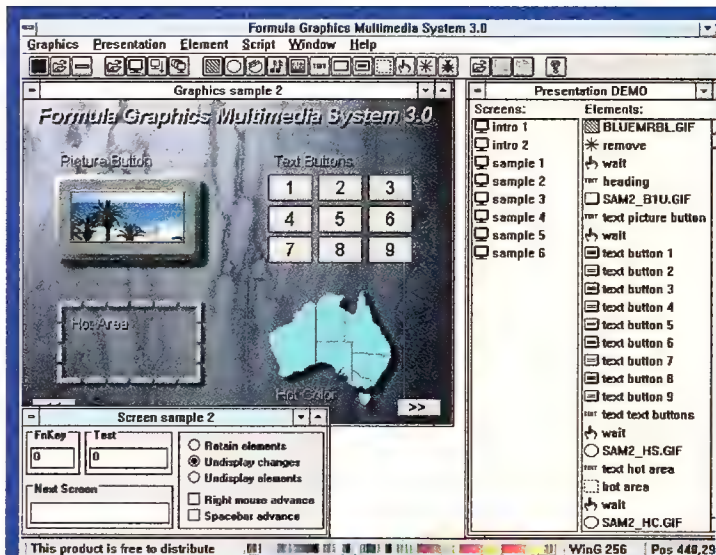
The version of 3D-Ware on our cover disc is the personal version, which can produce fast, detailed 3D graphics. If you're serious about creating the next big game, or even something like Virtua Fighter 2 or Daytona, you'll probably want to get hold of 3D-Ware Professional. This provides a comprehensive set of tools for 3D graphics creation (like the personal version), but also allows your polygon graphics to be texture mapped (wrapping a picture over a polygon to add texture and feel to the shapes) and shaded. The images shown on these pages feature texture mapping/shadings to reproduce them you'll need the Pro version. Ring 3D-Ware (0161) 237 9929 for upgrade details.

you'll need to program in C. So naturally, you'll also need a C compiler. To get you started we've included a custom version of Borland Turbo C++, this is installed when you select 3D-Ware on the cover disc. With this and our tutorials you'll soon be writing C++ programs (see the panel 'C for Yourself' on these pages). If you can already program in C and have a C compiler (with an Intel Object compatible linker) you can try writing a game to take advantage of 3D-Ware's power. Have a look at the some of the sample C programs which are stored in the \virtek\dos\Examples directory.

Next month we'll take you through using 3D-Ware and how to program games using it and C++. We'll also be taking a look at how you can go about creating some actual graphics using 3D-Ware. See you then.



Next month we'll be starting the C++ tutorials where we'll be taking you through this powerful language, step by step.



Formula Graphics Multimedia System 3.0

Harrow Software, GPO Box 1722, Sydney 2001, Australia CD
Email: formula@magna.com.au

To run select Formula Graphics 3 from the CD-ROM's main menu. After it has been installed onto your hard disk click on the Formula Graphics 3 icon in the program group.

Formula Graphics Multimedia System will bring pictures, sounds and animations to life. This release has all the features you need to build an interactive game or presentation. Here's a quick tutorial to get you started:

Select New from the presentation menu. Enter the name of the presentation in the 'Save As' window which will appear. To open our first screen select New Screen. After you enter a screen name, a graphics window and a screen window will open.

Now choose Background from the element menu. You can use any bitmap (.bmp) picture, this package does not supply any, but you'll find plenty in your Windows directory. A background element window will be displayed.

Now select Picture from the element list. Again, select a bitmap picture. A picture element window will open and the pictures name will be added to the presentation window's element list.

To add sound, choose Sound from the element menu. After selecting a sound (.wav file) you can test it by pressing the play button.

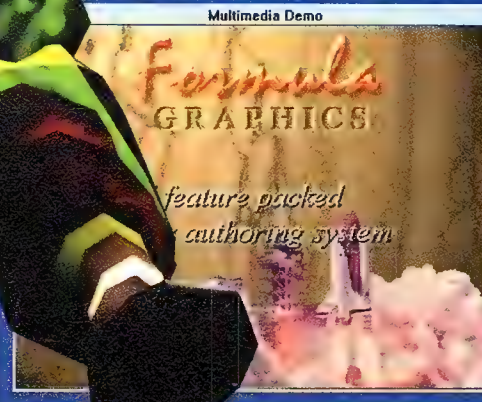
Finally, add an input by choosing Input from the element menu. After entering a name, an input element window will appear. Now select the 'key press/mouse click' option in the input element window.

You can test this screen by selecting Test Screen from the presentation menu. First the background will appear, then the picture followed by the sound. When the presentation gets to the input, it will stop and wait for either a mouse click or a key to be pressed.

If you get stuck or want to know more just click on the help menu which is provided within the package.

Requires: 386PC, Windows 3.1, and a VGA display.

◀ You supply the pics sound and text (and the imagination, of course), and let us supply the software to put it all together in an all-in-one multimedia presentation.



Gremlin Interactive (0114) 275 3423 • CD

Fatal Racing

To run select "Fatal Racing" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Featuring spiral roadways, 360 degree loops and insane jumps, Fatal Racing looks like a cross between Ridge Racer and the arcade classic, Hard Drivin'. Loads of cars, loads of tracks and a network option make this one to look out for, but naturally we couldn't give it a build up like that without giving you a chance to try it for yourself. That would be cruel, so we've got a playable demo for you. You're limited to one track and one car, but that should be enough to get your heart racing.

Look out for the review in this very issue over on page 76.

Requires: DX2 66, 4Mb RAM, 8Mb of hard disk, SVGA, Sound Blaster or compatible



▲ I think my paint might just need a bit of retouching.



▲ Stopping off at that motorway cafe is a bad idea.

Mech Warrior 2

Activision (0181) 742 9400 • CD

To run select "Mech Warrior 2" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Mech Warrior 2 is based on a series of best selling sci-fi books and sees you joining a mercenary clan and fighting for their honour. You control a large war robot (the Mech of the title) armed with an array of weapons — from machine guns and missiles to particle beam weapons and heavy cannons. Each mission has a number of objectives and after completing them all, you go to the final navigation point for extraction.

Although the mech can be viewed from an external perspective, in-cockpit is probably best and although there are too many keys to detail here, it's surprisingly easy to get to grips with. For the definitive review, see last issue.

Requires: DX2 66, 8Mb RAM, MSDOS 5, Sound Blaster or compatible.

I'm only glad that wasn't me. I'm allergic to being blown up. ►



▲ I have you now my pretty. I have you now!



TekWar

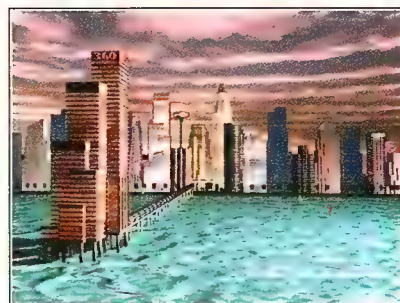
US Gold (0121) 606 1800 • CD

To run select 'TekWar' from the CD-ROM's main menu. An information screen will appear. Press the Esc key to move on and then follow the on-screen instructions.

TekWar the game is based upon William Shatner's best selling TekWar books, the subsequent films and now the cable television series. Who said Kirk was dead? You play a member of the Cosmos Security Agency, the private Anti-Tek force run by Walter Bascom — played by William Shatner in the television show. Tek, for the uninitiated, is a highly addictive and destructive drug. Bascom is a well-connected and rich industrialist devoted to taking down the Tek dealers of the day, known as TekLords.

TekWar uses the 3D "BUILD" engine, licensed exclusively from Texas-based developers Apogee, which allows for effects like maps with rooms above rooms, real swinging doors and even moving vehicles that can be boarded. Wandering around Los Angeles, 50 years in the future, you get to use weapons and equipment identical to those featured in the TV series. It looks good and the game play is brilliant, so beam into the demo now!

Requires: 486DX 66Mhz, 8MB RAM Sound Blaster or compatible and a VGA card.



▲ William Shatner looking is not looking too good these days is he?



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If you crave the ultimate in PC sound, check out the new WaveRider 32+ with CD-quality 16-bit, wave-table synthesis sound, 32 simultaneous voice playback capability and 128 instrument and 69 drum sound effects.

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The Dig

Virgin (0171) 3682255 • CD

To run select "The Dig" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

The Dig, from LucasArts, has been long awaited, but we should finally see it in the shops later this year. Although with this very issue in your greasy mitts you can take a look at Virgin's new baby (what do you mean, virgins can't have babies? Haven't you ever read the Bible?) a lot sooner than that. Plot wise you command a shuttle on a mission to divert an asteroid from one of those nasty collision-with-the-earth situations. You land, are transported to an alien world light years away, then have to figure out what the hell is going on. Sounds a little familiar really.

You get to play the first few scenes in the demo which is enough to give you a feel for the game. The interface is a minimalist point and click thing which is really easy to get to grips with so there's no point in me bantering on about it. Just remember that a right click brings up your inventory, drag an item out of it to use and then right click again to get rid of it. Enjoy.

Requires: 486, 4Mb RAM, VGA, Sound Blaster or compatible.



Mission Critical

Virgin (0171) 368 2255 • CD

To run select "Mission Critical" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

SVGA graphics and an appearance from Star Trek: The Next Generation's Michael Dorn (Worf) is enough to get any game noticed, but when it comes from Legend,



▲ What lovely toys! This is better than Christmas.

a company known for strong story lines and solid playability, then it has to be worth a look. Mission Critical will be one of the first Legend games to be distributed by Virgin under its new tie-up and if you want to know what it has in store for you, then we just happen to have a rolling demo of the game. What a remarkable coincidence, eh? Check out the last issue for our Legend profile including a round-up of their games.

Requires: DX2, 4Mb RAM, Sound Blaster or compatible.

Rednex

BMG (0171) 384 7500 • CD

To run select "Rednex" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Cotton eye Joe. Ah, now there was a song. Not a very good one, but a song nevertheless. This game is a generous French stick of graphics filled with lightly grilled music, served with a side order of FMV and garnished with gameplay. Scoff it down and throw it up. You know you want to.

Requires: 486, 4Mb RAM, VGA, Sound Blaster or compatible.

▲ That lift does not look at all safe.



▲ Told you.

Look out, there's a set of traffic lights in the middle of the track! ▼



Pole Position

Daze (0171) 258 3791 • CD

To run select "Pole Position" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

With the popularity of football management sims it's surprising that it's taken this long for Formula One to get a share of the action. The easiest way to describe Pole Position is Ultimate Soccer Manager for cars. You pick your team, develop engines, decide on race strategy, placate stropky drivers, cultivate sponsors and fire people.

In this demo you can't actually race, but you can explore all the aspects of the game in enough depth to let you jump right into the game if you buy it. Once you're on a hot-spot the text will come up. Just click it and away you go. When you want to quit click the waste basket in the main office and then on the door that says "Goodbye". Drivers start your engines.

Requires: DX2, 4Mb RAM, Sound Blaster or compatible.



▲ If you go down to the woods today, you'd better look out for the Formula 1 cars doing close to 200 m.p.h.

Shareware Shopping



Brand new this month, Shareware Shopping lets you sample the delights of shareware direct from your cover disc or disk. We rate it, you play it and if you like it don't forget to register 'cos that's what shareware's all about.

WinU Menu

WinU is a dedicated Windows 95 menu system with security access features that make it ideal for parents or those who need to restrict access to certain software on their PCs. It's useful for supervising Internet use, monitoring games playing or preventing your most used or important applications being meddled with. And it's easy to use too.

You install WinU by placing it in your Startup folder. Once there you must change the Windows 95 taskbar so that it doesn't always appear on top, and then WinU will take complete control of your system.

From here on you have all the protection you need for your PC. This means it will only let users run programs which have menu buttons and only the password will get them into the customisation screens.

It also means that you can set the amount of time that users have in any program, allowing them a period of grace so that they can save whatever



▲ **All your programs can be accessed from a single custom designed screen.**

they're doing before it closes. Or you can activate the programs file logging feature that shows how long each program was run and for how long.

The layout of the menu can be customised, although it could be a little more flexible and friendly to set up. As well as the password system, each application can be assigned a warning panel so nobody gets caught out when a program suddenly tells them to save up because it's about to quit.

There are also a few lesser features such as customisable backgrounds. But that's all a bonus when you consider the usefulness of this program. If you're worried about children getting at things they shouldn't or want to restrict the use of a PC's modem to save on 'phone bills, this package is perfect in every sense.

Evaluation versions from Goodman International • (01782) 335650 • Price \$29.95

PC Review Rating 8

H.U.R.L. (CD and DISK)

HURL is a first person perspective action game that should appeal to youngsters. It offers all the thrills and spills of a game like Doom but without the blood-spattered violence or the frightening sound effects. In fact, the most you have to fear from HURL is a big duck throwing an egg at you.

The object of the game is to collect the trash from the streets, scoring points as you do so. The baddies, an amusing assortment ranging from the **HURL — something to do with rubbish methinks.**



The collection of cartoon baddies will make them smile.

aftermentioned duck to a crocodile, a cat and a pig, throw things at you to make you dirty. So you have to spend your points on soap to get cleaned up.

The game runs very smoothly although the graphics tend to be a little blocky. The sound effects and music are good and there are plenty of extras designed to make you chuckle. And before you ask, I've no idea what HURL stands for...

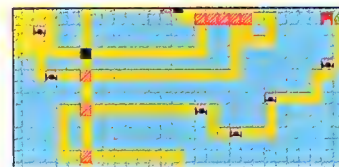
Evaluation version from Ensign on • (0181) 778 2871 • Price \$39.95

PC Review Rating 7

Virus

Virus is a simple but fairly enjoyable Windows game that turns the tables on conventional wisdom and puts you in the hot seat as Vinny the Virus. You have a whole hard disk to play on and must infect as much as possible before the horrible virus killer comes along and eats you alive — all the while avoiding the bad clusters and gathering up bytes to score points.

You move the virus around using the arrow keys and can leap one or two squares by holding down the space bar, to stay one jump ahead of that baddie. Presumably it's meant to be that spoil-sport Dr Solomon and his anti-social anti-virus software.

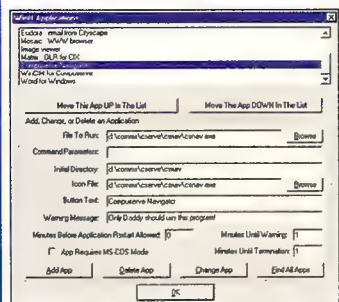


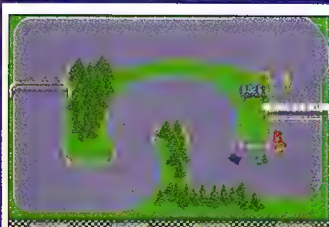
The game itself is little more than average and the graphics are only fractionally more exciting than they were on my long dead Spectrum. The kids will probably like it though.

Evaluation and registered versions from The Thompson Partnership • (01889) 564601 • Price \$10

PC Review Rating 5

Each button can be setup just the way you want it in WinU. ▼





▲ **Seen this somewhere before, have you?**



Super Speed

Following the success of Micro Machines, it's nice to see the old favourites dragged out and revamped. I'm talking, of course, about the overhead miniature race games that were so popular on the first 16-bit computers like the Amiga and of which Super Speed is a polished if unoriginal clone.

It's a full colour DOS-only game (it has problems with Windows 95) that offers up to four players racing against each other on the same keyboard. The choice of keys is sensible (after all there's only left, right and go to remember) and the sound and graphics are nice and smooth. There are three tracks in the shareware version packed with various obstacles to keep you on your toes.

Evaluation versions from Ensign on ● (0181) 778 2871 ● Price \$15

PC Review Rating **7**

PixFolio

PixFolio is a 32-bit Windows 95 image cataloguing program designed to help you manage your image collection. PixFolio can read a variety of different graphics formats produced by popular programs including TIFF, Targa, BMP, PCX, GIF, JPEG and PhotoCD, as well as MPEG, AVI and FLI animations, MIDI and WAV files and several vector formats such as CGM and WMF. It can also convert picture formats.

PixFolio even displays vector graphics, videos and sound files.



The catalogues are more than just lists — you can annotate the entries with your own comments and add keywords to make search and retrieval much easier.

Images can be rotated, resized, flipped about an axis, cropped and expanded. They can be dithered in various ways too and the program acts as an OLE server, so you can embed PixFolio images in other applications. The interface looks good but it is a little confusing initially and it's disappointing to see that file loading and saving doesn't appear to benefit from the 32-bit code, it's as sluggish as it ever was. A potentially useful application.

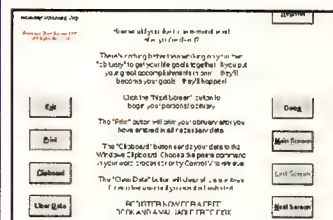
Evaluation version from Ensign on ● (0181) 778 2871 ● Price \$35

PC Review Rating **5**

Write Your Own Obituary

There has to be at least one daft shareware release a month and this is it. I kid you not, the title of the thing is as above. You enter some sketchy details of your life and the program puts it all together and comes up with the words you hope will never be said. At least not for a while.

Well just for a laugh, here's what they said. Or rather what I said...



"Charles Hathaway, the nation's top shareware columnist, died yesterday at the age of 35. Mr. Hathaway was born on 31 August 1960 in Newcastle-on-Tyne, the son of Thomas Frederick Hathaway and Jessie Butler. Mr Hathaway attended Queen Mary's College, London, where he was awarded the degree of BSc in 1981. Mr Hathaway was a popular shareware columnist and reviewer for the legendary computer magazine PC Review. His uncanny ability to track down the latest shareware releases is reputed to have made him a small fortune."

Evaluation versions from Ensign on ● (0181) 778 2871 ● Price \$13

PC Review Rating **5**

Wordwiz 3.0

Wordwiz is an automated word puzzle composer for Windows. You can design and create six different kinds of puzzle — crossword, instant crossword, word search, number fill-in, word fill-in and instant word fill-in. Wordwiz can export puzzles to a Windows Metafile or a colour bitmap so you can use them in other documents such as newsletters, classroom worksheets and so on.

You specify the size and layout of the puzzle and watch the composer automatically fill in the gaps using its 30,000 word database.

If you want to ensure your own words are used, you can place your own into the empty grid pattern and lock them in place before starting the automatic composer. You can also

write your own clues for the full crosswords. If you don't want to export the puzzle you can preview it on screen or print it out directly from within the program. You can specify one of several Windows fonts for the typeface and use different colours and block styles for even more variation.

Evaluation versions from Ensign on ● (0181) 778 2871 ● Price \$19

PC Review Rating **7**



LOADING YOUR CD-ROM/DISK

CD-ROM:

To run this month's Shareware select the program from the CD ROM's main menu using your cursor keys and then press the Enter key.

Disk:

At the DOS prompt type a:pcr and press the return key. Now follow the on-screen instructions.

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

The programs on these pages represent just a small selection of the thousands of programs available from PD and shareware suppliers. If you like what you see here and would like to register simply call the numbers shown on these pages. Alternatively give them a call and request a catalogue.

CD-ROM/Cover disk help

The PC Review cover disks and CD-ROM discs are rigorously checked and scanned for all known viruses at each stage during their production. However, cover disks and cover CDs are used at the reader's own risk. PC Review can therefore accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by the use of our disks or CD-ROMs. If circumstances dictate that we are unable to supply the stated program, we will endeavour to provide alternative software. Sorry, but PC Review will not be held responsible for content changes.

Help! My CD-ROM/Cover disk isn't working...

If only some of the programs on the disc crash or will not load then you probably have a memory problem, in this case read the 'Before you start: sort out those nasty memory problems' section on page 16 of this very issue. If you are still completely stuck after that then ring our cover disk hotline on (01451) 810788, between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm weekdays.

Help! My CD-ROM/Cover disk is damaged...

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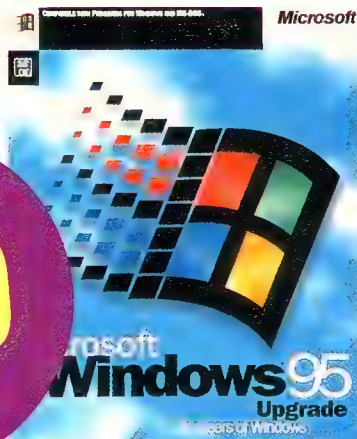
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ESTIMATE THE POWER



NEWS

Making a show of yourself...

The Autumn European Computer Trade Show is by far the best place to take an ogle at all the games and multimedia products lining up for Christmas and beyond. The PC Review team give you their tips for the top.

Adventures Of The Smart Patrol

Warner Interactive

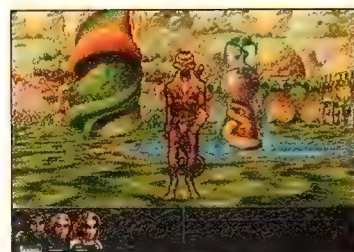
The name might sound a bit naff, but that's exactly the intention in this CD-ROM from the founders of experimental pop, DEVO. Help the member of the Smart Patrol and save the world from its surrealistic enemies.

Release: Nov. '95

Albion

Blue Byte

As the name suggests, this is a role-playing game, and instead of using the old hackneyed clichés of fantasy, the world to be explored has been created

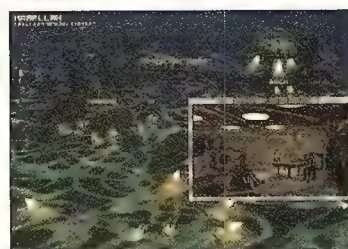
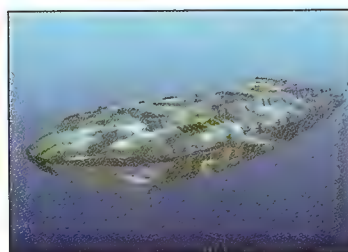


from scratch, including all the behavioural patterns of the local inhabitants. Release: Nov. '95

Archimedean Dynasty

Blue Byte

We don't know an awful lot about this game save for the fact that it's a highly moistened submarine simulation with



graphics to die for. There's loads of weapons, a whole world to check out, and over a hundred people to have a chat to.

Release: Early '96

Bad Day On The Midway

Warner Interactive

Bad Day On The Midway is the sequel to The Resident's Freak Show, and again features some of the weirdest

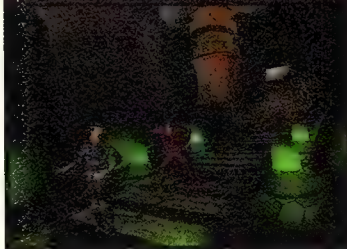
One to watch...

Alien Odyssey

Philips

Alien Odyssey from Philips is an action adventure developed by Argonaut (FX Fighter) which sees you as a planetary surveyor. After an incident on a routine survey, you go on the run with a member of a repressed alien race. The action is a mixture of Bioforge and Descent and the game should be released this month.

Release: Out soon



graphics this side of a hippy's acid flashback. Warner Interactive should be opening the gates soon.

Release: Out soon

Bermuda Syndrome

BMG

When Jack J. Thompson is shot down by German planes while on a top secret mission over the Bermuda Triangle he find himself in an alternative dimension and it's up to him to save his bacon.

This point and click adventure features graphics by former Disney artists so expect smooth animation.

Release: Out soon

Big Red Racing

Domark

Going all out for racing fun is Big Red Racer, from Domark. The game features music from Hangnail and you race your little heart out in desert, snow, lakes and quarries in a variety of bizarre vehicles.

Release: Out soon

Blam! Machinehead

Core Design

Weird name, weird game. Your character in this 3D shoot 'em up has been strapped to an enormous bomb and must complete a series of missions in order to avoid being toasted. Sounds like a barrel of laughs.

Release: Early '96

Capitalism

Interactive Magic

Pure, unbridled greed comes to the PC this month with Capitalism, from



Interactive Magic. The game is very much business strategy but with a greater focus on the "greed is good" style of the 1980s.

Release: Out soon

One to watch...

Jetfighter III

Mission Studios/US Gold

As flight simulators go, only Virgin's Flight Unlimited has made people step back and slaver. Until now that is, because Jetfighter III combines both fantastic looking scenery (all mapped correctly and plotted using specialist software), and the smoothest of fighterplane gameplay. Add to this that there's a full multimedia plane guide, an aircraft carrier to explore Myst style, and a 'virtual' cockpit that allows you to point your beady eyes absolutely anywhere inside or outside the plane and you are possibly looking at the best flight combat simulation ever released on the glorious PC.

Release: May '96

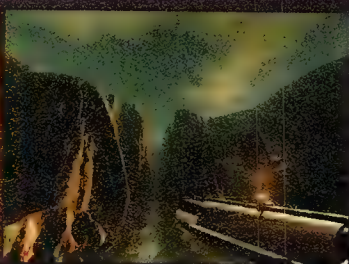
One to watch...

Shadow Of The Emperor — Battle Isle 3

Blue Byte

As war games go the Battle Isle series managed to merge the strategic hexagon-based troop manoeuvring with elements of... get this... fun. And thankfully this made for a far more enjoyable game format. Battle Isle 3 goes one step further and really introduces everything that could make this kind of genre appealing to just about any form of gamer. There's cut-away video sequences that brief you and keep the plot moving along quite nicely. Plus there's a brand new Windows based graphic interface that makes every piece of information far easier to draw up, and it now supports network play for up to eight players all competing against each other for the Empire.

Release: Out soon



Darkseed II

Cyberdreams/Infogrames

This is the sequel to the H.R. Giger designed, go on have a guess... Dark Seed, and as such really needs no introduction. Nonetheless it's more of the role-playing adventure horror that made the first one sell in bucket-loads, and from our glimpse we reckon it's at least ten times better too.

Release: Winter '95

Deathtrap Dungeon

Domark

Based on the best selling Fighting Fantasy books of Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson, Deathtrap Dungeon features an easy to get to grips with combat system as well as some truly sumptuous graphics.

Release: Out soon

Descent 2

Interplay

Out soon from Interplay is Descent 2. Fantastic new levels, new enemies, new scenarios but why don't they ship it with a sick bag?

Release: Out soon

Duke Nukem 3D

Formgen/US Gold

3D Realms, the company behind Terminal Velocity and Rise Of The Triad, has developed a new 3D perspective engine that surpasses that of the Doom series. Duke Nukem 3D uses this and sort-of ends up being a cross between Triad and Dark Forces.

Release: TBA

Dust: A Tale Of The Wired West

BMG

Released by BMG, Dust allows you to explore a wild western town that is

brimming with gunfighters, shamans. Don't forget to search for the hidden treasure too.

Release: Out soon

Frankenstein: Through The Eyes Of A Monster

Interplay

In Frankenstein you get a slightly different take on the monster's plight since he sir, is you sir! Your quest is to discover what happened to you and your young daughter and the meddling Dr Frankenstein is played by Tim Curry.

Release: Out soon

Full Tilt

Maxis

Maxis has a new title for Windows 95. Full Tilt is a pinball game with three diverse tables which feature many novelties.

Release: TBA

One to watch...

Olympic Gold

BMG

Also from BMG is Olympic Gold, a multimedia exploration of the last 100 years of the Olympics. The title features video, trivia, stats and a rule book of the events (which should be accurate, considering it was produced in partnership with the Olympic Committee).

Release: Out soon

Gender Wars

SCI

Touted as possibly the least PC PC game, Gender Wars crosses Cannon Fodder and Syndicate to great effect. You can either play as the women or the men and you have to blast (whilst using a large slice of strategy) the opposite gender into obliteration. Each side has



the stereotypes more commonly associated with them, and we'll refrain from passing that on until a later date (or else my wife will kill me).

Release: End of '95

I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream

Cyberdreams/Infogrames

No ECTS report would be complete without a brief mention of I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream, and finally we can report that it's finished and, thanks to Infogrames, will be coming out shortly. It's a point-and-click adventure with some truly horrific effects, and seeing as it's based on a Harlan Ellison (top sci-fi bloke) novel, you can guarantee that it's strong in the plotline department.

Release: Out soon

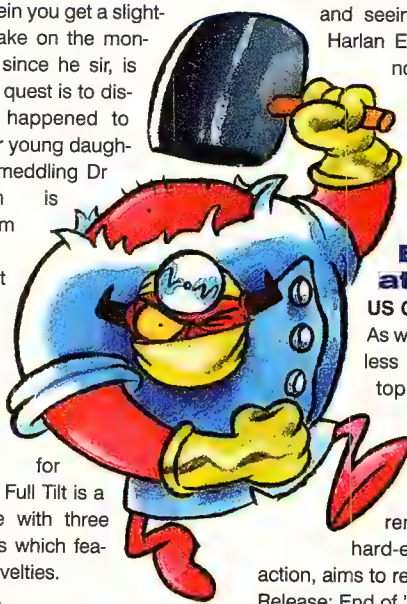
Johnny Bazoocatone

US Gold

As we've pointed out countless times there's very few top quality platform games on the PC, and Johnny Bazoocatone, with its Silicon Graphics-rendered sprites and hard-edged rock'n'roll

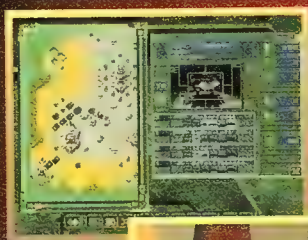
action, aims to rectify all of that.

Release: End of '95



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One to watch...

The Dark Eye

Warner Interactive

Inspired by the work of Edgar Allan Poe, *The Dark Eye* is a nightmarish exploration of a mansion where Poe's stories come alive. The game features the voice of beat generation writer, William S. Burroughs — author of *Naked Lunch* — as both narrator and one of the characters and music from Thomas Dolby. Animation is by Doug Beswich (*Beetlejuice*, *Aliens*, *The Addams Family*) and the 3D environment is as stunning as Warner Interactive say.

Release: Out soon



Kingdom O' Magic

SCI

This is no ordinary point-and-click adventure. Kingdom O' Magic has characters that are rendered with Silicon Graphics workstations, artificial intelligence to allow the characters to do just



about what they want, and three different scenarios to complete (although with the Artificial Intelligence no game will be the same anyway).

Release: End of '95

Michelangelo

BMG

This multimedia title from BMG explores the life and work of one of the most famous artists ever, from his early apprenticeships to his later masterpieces. To access his work you have to explore and understand his life.

Release: Early '96

Musee D'Orsay

BMG

An interactive tour of the D'Orsay museum, best known for its collection of 19th Century and Impressionist art.

Release: Out soon

Panic In The Park

Warner Interactive

Also out soon is Panic In The Park, an interactive movie featuring Erika Eleniak (*Baywatch*). You take the role of a reporter at a court room battle between twins — one good, one evil — for control of the SkyView amusement park.

Release: Out soon

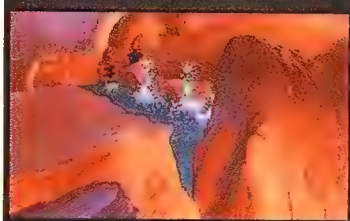
One to watch...

The Dig

Virgin

Produced by LucasArts and based on an idea from Steven Spielberg, Virgin's *The Dig* is set to be one of the big adventure game releases of this year. You take the role of the leader of a shuttle team spirited away to an alien world and charged with finding your way home.

Release: TBA



Redshift 2

Maxis

Also from Maxis is this upgrade to the popular desktop planetarium, Redshift. The interface is simple enough to involve beginners in the world of astronomy.

Release: TBA

Riddle Of Master Lu

Sanctuary Woods/US Gold

Although there is a veritable mountain of point-and-click graphical adventures, and although this is another one of them, *The Riddle Of Master Lu* is unique. All the characters in the game are cinematically digitised and during



conversation a small video box appears that allows you to see the characters up close. The plot is very Indy in style, but it certainly looks slick.

Release: Out soon

Road Warrior: Quarantine II

Gametek

Sequel to the popular Doom meets Taxi game, *Quarantine*, *Road Warrior* hit the streets this month, on CD-ROM and HD disk. The game sees you driving your taxi for the resistance (don't ask me) and arms you with some fun weapons.

Release: Out soon

Shadow Warrior

Formgen/US Gold

Er... Doom with Ninjas, basically. Also uses the new 3D Realms/Apogee 'Build'



engine to great effect and promises to be much, much, more puzzle-based than shoot 'em up.

Release: TBA

Shell Shock

Core Design

Blast your way through this arcade-style



One to watch...

Time Gate

Infogrames

Although we've seen the back of the *Alone In The Dark* games (it's always good to finish with a trilogy I've always thought), the 3D engine has been taken to a room, fed loads of pies and given a Bella make-over. Hence, *Time Gate* is coming, and although at first glance it looks like its close cousins, it's far improved over the previous best-selling games. It also has a far more involving plot featuring time travel, Knights, damsels in distress and a whole load of medieval tomfoolery. The graphics are very nicely detailed and it promises more of a challenge than the *Alone* games.

Release: Nov. '95



3D-tank game to the sounds of a thumping rap soundtrack. The graphics were designed on Silicon Graphics workstations so the whole thing looks distinctly sexy.

Release: Out soon

Star Rangers

Interactive Magic

Also coming from Interactive Magic is *Star Rangers*, an action strategy game



that mixes edge of the seat dog-fighting with a strong strategy element.

Release: Out soon

Super Bubsy

Warner Interactive

Bubsy bursts onto the PC care of Warner Interactive in *Super Bubsy*. The Bobcat with attitude will appear in a Windows 95 platformer near you soon.

Release: Out soon

One to watch...

XS**Sci**

XS is the ideal game to network play even if you haven't got any friends. The computer, you see, has 60 inbuilt game characters, all with different personalities, so you can pretend that you have indeed got many colleagues all of whom share your passion for collecting toe-nail clippings. The game itself is a combat simulator that places you in an arena, and using a cunning 3D environment attempts to recreate the thrill of one-on-one-on-one unadulterated scrapping, the like of which only previously seen in a Quasar game. It also used another buzzword (other than network play) in that the characters are all motion captured, and move very slickly - this is one to watch quite literally.

Release: Early '96

**Swagman****Core Design**

Swagman may look cute, but beneath that pretty, Silicon-graphics-rendered exterior lurks a freaky, nightmarish adventure in the vein of the console game Zelda. You control two characters as they puzzle their way through 20 whole levels.

Release: Mid '96

The Multimedia Language System Plus!**Infogrames**

Whether you want to learn French, Spanish, German or English (and there's a few people in the PC Review office that'd find this handy), not only is The Multimedia Language System Plus! a terrific utility to use, but it comes with

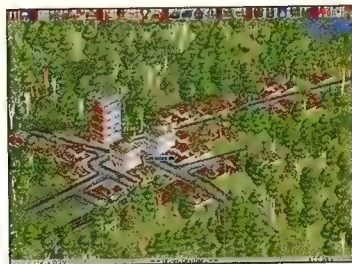


voice recognition so you can speak back into the computer and it'll tell you if you're doing well or not.

Release: Out now

Transport Tycoon Deluxe**Microprose**

Microprose is releasing an update to its popular train sim, Transport Tycoon in November. Transport Tycoon Deluxe

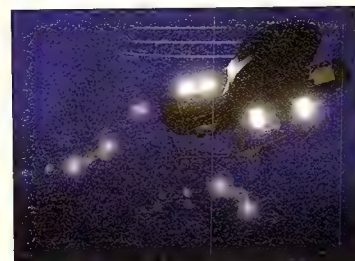


will include a number of new features, including "dirty tricks", a world editor, new climate regions and network play for two.

Release: Nov. '95

Wetlands**New World Computing/US Gold**

This is a sort of Rebel Assault, with many varied styles of gameplay mixed with cartoony cut-away sequences of a more Manga flavour (ie gory as heck). There's blood all over the shop, but there does remain a question about the



in-game playability.

Release: Late '95

Where's Wally? At The Circus.**Warner Interactive**

Warner continues the best selling Where's Wally? series with educational CD-ROM for 5-9 year olds. All you need to do is help the red and white bescarfed Wally find the Magic Golden Whistle, or there'll be no show.

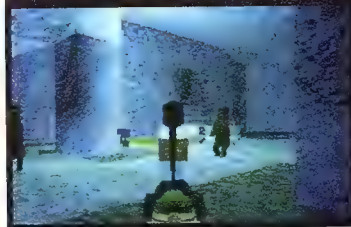
Release: Nov. '95

One to watch...

Tomb Raider**Core Design**

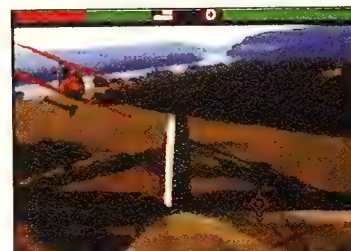
This one had us drooling all over our shoes, despite the fact that it's only in the earliest stages of development. Imagine a cross between Descent and Alone in the Dark and you'll get the idea - full, real-time 3D motion, variable camera angles and highly detailed texture mapping make this a visual feast. The story is a sort of Indiana Jones-style romp (although your character is female), where you must explore ancient cities and uncover mystical secrets in search of treasure.

Release: Spring '96

**Wing Nuts****BMG**

Only you can save the pride of the Royal Air Force in this WW1 flight sim from BMG. The game features FMV and aims to be the top war combat flight sim.

Release: Out soon



One to watch...

Wipeout**Sony Interactive**

The best game on the super consoles (in our opinion), Wipeout on the Playstation, is coming to the PC soon, and it looks every bit as good. You get to drive an anti-gravity vehicle around a series of high-speed futuristic race-tracks and although it sounds more than a little similar to Hi-Octane, the gameplay, style and music is of a previously unreach standard. The music is by The Chemical Brothers, Leftfield and Orbital and is so good that Sony is also releasing a stand alone Wipeout album just for those who don't have a computer. But then they won't be able to play the game, huh?

Release: Nov. '95



Sorry to all the companies and their respective products if we have missed them out but we are few and they are many. Again, sorry!

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The World In Motion

After a successful opening night hosted by Gamesmaster presenter Dominik Diamond, Virtual World is now open for business at London's Trocadero. Unlike the Virtuality location in the same building, the games at Virtual World do not require you to encase your head in a heavy VR helmet. Instead, players are invited to sit in one of eight specially built cabinets which are linked together, thus offering everyone the chance to experience the joys of competitive network gaming.

Virtual World currently has two games to choose from. The best known game, Battletech, is similar to Activision's Mechwarrior II (reviewed PC Review Issue 48), since both games are based on the same role-playing game. Eight players are invited to take control of a heavily-armed, mechanised battle robot and the object to hunt down and destroy the opposing players in a large, 3D arena. At the end of the game a comprehensive report is printed out for each player, enabling them to compare scores and either gloat over the losers or cower in shame.

The second game on offer is Red Planet, a futuristic racing game set in space. Again, up to eight players can take part and everyone receives a report



▲ Virtual World does away with bulky VR helmets in favour of suitably futuristic console cabinets.



▲ Dominik Diamond was impressed by Virtual World

sheet to take home as a memento. It uses the same cabinets as Battletech, but offers the player a much faster, reaction-based game.

Dominik Diamond was extremely impressed by his experiences of Virtual World. The computer games enthusiast went on record as saying, 'I must have

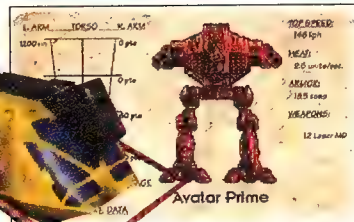
played nearly 1000 games in the past few years and, all in all, I don't think I'm being unduly flattering when I say that Virtual World is a great leap forward for gaming, and it was great to try something genuinely original.'

So, if you want to try out the Virtual World experience for yourself, head

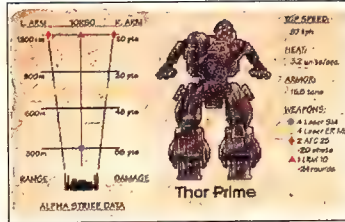
down to the Trocadero at Piccadilly Circus. Admission costs £7.00 for adults or £5.50 for those aged 14 and under, and you can expect around 25 minutes worth of high-tech entertainment. In addition, first timers who book two missions at the same time will be awarded a third free.



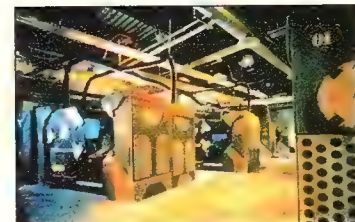
▲ Players are invited to choose their crafts in Red Planet.



▲ Battletech also offers a choice of robot.



▲ Try out any of Battletech's robots to see which one suits you.



▲ Virtual World has a good atmosphere, thanks to its sci-fi looks.

Virtual vertigo

Scared of heights? Spiders give you the willies? Well, help is at hand because US scientists have developed a new way of treating phobias using virtual reality technology. After being placed in a realistic VR environment, patients can confront their fears in the knowledge that it is just a simulation. Vertigo can be conquered by showing the patient a scene from an elevated height, while a psychiatrist talks to them individually and helps them through their fear. A similar technique has been suggested for helping arachnaphobes by simulating spiders crawling around in close proximity.



Experts at Georgia Tech in Atlanta have found the technique to be more successful than conventional treatments, which involve showing the phobic a series of still images before introducing them to the real thing. The new VR alternative is thought to be less distressing to the patient than existing methods.

It's good to talk

Move over BT — the cost of long distance calls are set to be dramatically slashed thanks to a revolutionary piece of equipment called the Webphone.

Costing just £50, the Webphone will be available from Quarterdeck, the company best known for the memory manager QEMM. It has been designed to enable Internet users to contact each other by telephone without paying the high cost of a long distance call. Once the Webphone has been installed, the user can contact other Internet users around the world and they will only be charged the cost of contacting a Webphone service provider, which is generally at local call rate.

The bottom line is that you could talk to your auntie Esmerelda in Papua New Guinea for the price of a local call — as long as she has access to the net, of course.

The system allows normal telephone-type conversations, but Quarterdeck insists it is not pitching Webphone as a cheap alternative for long-distance telephone calls. Its chief aim is to provide a more comprehensive teleconferencing-system, with real-time file sharing which allows both parties to work on a single document simultaneously, for example. Eat your heart out Bob Hoskins!

All in One

One machine designed serve all your multimedia needs has always been a good idea in principle. Trouble is, as Commodore and Philips found to their cost with the CDTV and the CD-i respectively, in practice, Joe Public just didn't want to

know. Getting on the multimedia bandwagon now,

though, is Olivetti's new Envision system, an all-in home entertainment, home computing and communication station packed together in one unit.

Based around a DX4 processor running at 100 MHz or an Intel Pentium chip running at 75MHz, the Envision features gadgets galore. Link it up to a normal phoneline and you've also got yourself a ready made net link, fax, modem and answering service. A remote control and infrared wireless keyboard serve as extra cake icing.

The Envision is designed to hook up to the TV via a SCART lead and boasts a special device to eliminate the usual screenflicker. The quad-speed CD drive runs music CDs (through its own two speakers or a TV or hi-fi), CD-ROMs and with the use of the incorporated M-

PEG board on the high-end model, supports Kodak Photo-CDs and Video-CDs. Attach another SCART cable to your VCR, and you can save CD-ROM sequences and Photo-CD images onto a normal video tape. There's also a

MIDI player option for the budding musician to hook up a keyboard. Software-wise

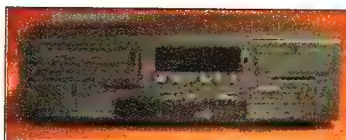
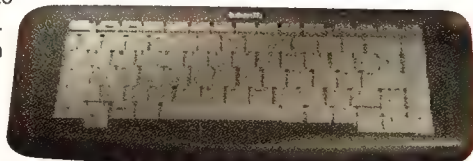
we're talking

Windows '95 as standard as well as Microsoft Works 3.0 and a vast range of multimedia titles and applications.

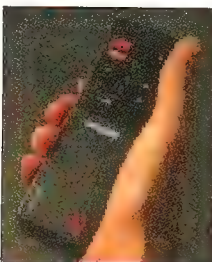
One criticism generally aimed at multimedia machines is that with technology advancing so rapidly, it won't be long before the machine's technical capabilities are out of date. Olivetti thinks it has cracked this problem though because as Marketing Manager, Mike Chandler explained: "This system, because it's PC based, has been designed to be fully and easily upgradable so whichever direction technology takes in the future, whether it's recordable CDs or an upgraded M-PEG board, we'll be ready for it." In fact, the firm is already looking to the future and have included a Smart Card slot which will also turn the machine into a satellite decoder.

As to the question of whether the great British public is ready for this all-in-one experience, Mike commented, "The PC market in this country is very well established. Multimedia has lifted the market up phenomenally and this system, as well as having all the multimedia and communications functions you could want, is a fully functional PC which we think will appeal to everybody."

On the cost front the firm has certainly tried to keep it to the bare minimum with the DX4/100 costing £1,399, the P75 without MPEG £1,699 and the P75 with MPEG £1,899.



▲ Olivetti's smart black box.



◀ Like any conventional hi-fi system, the Envision has its own remote control. Total entertainment at your fingertips.

▲ Top mens' mag GQ, the guru of all things masculine and trend-setter extraordinaire (allegedly) is making the leap to the Internet and publisher Conde Nast promises to make the experience a much easier ride by using specially developed software to cut out the over-long picture-loading time and others such net associated irritants. To tune in, just walk this way: <http://www.condenast.co.uk>.

In brief

It's a Bit of an Animal

A meaty comic adventure explodes onto the PC scene early next year as TV's most outrageous advertising star gets his own game. The tasty Pepperami star, the guy (or is it a gal, how do you sex a Pepperami anyway?) with absurd tendencies towards shredding himself on a grater and fighting his way out of a paper bag will be transferring such lunacy to an interactive adventure based around meat head's zany world. So far, little is known of the plot but the game will feature hand drawn graphics by ex-Disney artists, a 360 degree movement field and the voice of comedian Ade Edmondson. More news soon.

PC For Pope

It's official! PCs are tops according to the British game-playing public. According to a survey of 200 families, consoles are lagging behind with more than half of the under 18-year-olds asked (55%) voting-multimedia PC as the most advanced games platform around.

Packard Bell's survey found that the Sega Mega Drive was the nearest rival with a measly 20% share of the vote while the much-hyped super consoles, Saturn and Playstation, were not mentioned at all.

Another big turn up for the books was that, far from being a nation of blood 'n' guts Doom freaks, most kids prefer a good platformer, an educational title or a simulation. Well wouldn't ya know?

Prison of Oz

The Ozzies often dub the English whinging poms – talk about pots calling kettles black! This month one Antipodean had the cheek to complain to the Advertising Standards Authority about an ad for PC security firm, Ethan Adams, which claimed its Touchlock device 'was developed in Australia, where criminality is part of history.' The ASA rejected the complaint claiming 'the ad is unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence'. What can the Australians expect when their most famous export is Prisoner Cell Block H?

The Jury's Out

Tell 12 different people about one event and you can guarantee you'll get 12 entirely different pictures. That's the problem courts have faced for centuries when trying to describe a crime to a jury panel. Yet again it's computer technology to the rescue with the American based Engineer Animation Inc coming up with computer animated cartoons which simulate any event for use in court rooms and on TV news shows. The animation, although perhaps not a carbon copy of the actual event, at least gives everyone the same idea.

New PC Graphics Blow-away Super Consoles

Stunningly realistic, high-speed, 3D games are to appear on the PC. In separate moves two of the biggest PC entertainment hardware developers Creative Labs and Diamond have shown plug-in cards that will allow PCs to run games with graphics far superior to those of Sony and Sega's next generation super consoles. Games developers are already flocking to the new technology writing specific versions of their games to take advantage of the hardware. PC manufacturers too are also preparing to produce systems with the cards fitted in expectation of huge demand this Christmas.

Creative Labs revealed its 3D Blaster card at the recent European Computer Trade Show. While Diamond, makers of the hugely popular Diamond Stealth graphics card, has released the Diamond Edge 3D card.

Fair advantage

The advantages of such cards are clear. When playing games that feature 3D graphics on normal PCs the processor has to calculate the complex instructions to produce the 3D images, as well as handling the gameplay. Even Pentium chips don't have enough power to handle both tasks well at once. Hence the reason why PC games such as Screamer and Fatal Racing don't look as good as similar games on the Sony PlayStation or Sega Saturn. The new plug-in-cards, however, take away the 3D graphics calculations from the processor, using dedicated custom chips to manipulate them. By doing so both the speed and realism of the graphics is dramatically improved



▲ *Sega Rally is possibly the best polygon-based driving game.*

And soon, thanks to the wonders of new 3D specialised cards, it may be coming to the PC. ▶

(above that seen on the PlayStation for instance) while the gameplay also improves as the CPU is freed up.

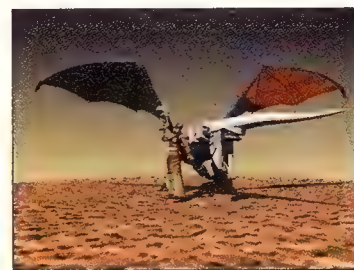
Games developers have already recognised the advantages, with Id, EA, Interplay, Mindscape, and Ocean, being just a few of the 200 software houses that have signed on the dotted line to develop for cards. Sega is also converting several of its games to run on the Diamond Edge 3D model. The first two will be Panzer Dragoon, a strange 3D shoot 'em up with stunning graphics, and Virtua Fighter Remix, which is one of the finest one-on-one fighting games ever made. Both these titles are due out very soon and Sega also reckon there's a strong possibility of Daytona and Sega Rally, — two of its land-mark driving coin-ops — also appearing. Three



other as yet un-named arcade game creators are working with 3D Blaster, with one of those possibly being Namco, creator of such amazing games as Tekken and Ridge Racer.

The biggest difference between the two cards is that the Diamond model, based around a chip from Nvidia, has built-in sound capabilities and is able to produce 32 separate sound channels at once. Strangely, the 3D Blaster from Creative Labs, famed as developers of the industry standard Sound Blaster card, doesn't have any on-board sound facility. Instead you'll need to buy a Sound Blaster or compatible card, if you don't already have one. Pricing for the 3D Blaster card was still being finalised as we went to press, but the Diamond card will sell for £249.

PC manufacturer Red Box is the first company to announce a PC with built-in 3D card. Its Winstation 3D features the Diamond Edge 3D card in a Pentium 90-based PC and has been tuned specifically for games players. Red Box can be contacted on 01480 405541.



▲ *Panzer Dragoon on the Saturn will soon be converted to the PC.*

Bombs Away

America is to check the safety of proposed nuclear detonations, with the help of the world's fastest computer.

Designed by Intel specifically for the task, the \$46 million supercomputer will be based around the P6 microprocessor chip (due out on general release later this year as a Pentium chip replacement).

The computer uses an awesome 9,000 Pentium chips. And it runs them all in tandem, so you won't be able to set off bombs at home.

This amazing piece of kit can carry out a whopping 1.8 trillion calculations a second (compared to a measly 150 million which is all a single top-end Pentium chip can handle) and when finished will be as powerful as most of the largest 50,000 main-frame comput-

ers in the world put together. Wow!

This also means that to controversial nuclear testing in small regions of the world, like Mururoa, will no longer be required, and results can be gleaned safely and inexpensively.



▲ *The nuclear testing in Mururoa will no longer be necessary.*

Pentium or Pentagon?

Every year at ECTS we stagger back to the office, pockets bulging with press releases — most of which find the bin within the first five minutes — but this year we plucked one little gem from the trash can. Society Against Computers (S.A.C.) — headed by mother of three, Marie Summer — believe that computers are evil and threaten the destruction of our world. Entitled "Work in the Computer Industry" their (hand-typed) release warned us that far from contributing to a brave new world, we were in fact helping bring about more unemployment, social disintegration, isolation and injustice. Naturally alarmed by this we spoke to Marie about the threat, and most especially about computer games: "the violence in them is horrendous, everywhere you turn." But S.A.C. are worried about a whole range of dangers from computing including, "the

pure porn of many that are getting through to our children."

S.A.C. believes that the growth of computing is being orchestrated by the large corporations who's goal is to make us dependent on these machines, because "the last thing computer companies want is children running in woods, fishing in streams and living the outdoor life." After all, "God has created all this beauty that's out there."



▲ *Some anti-computer hippies in a field, yesterday. Er, probably.*

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humpback bridges
and aerial
corkscrews!

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on a P.C.

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option.

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programme drives the
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Features 8 prototype super cars.

True 3D, championship gameplay and a full
range of virtual camera angles alongside deadly
competitors intent on keeping you off the road!



fatal racing

play it

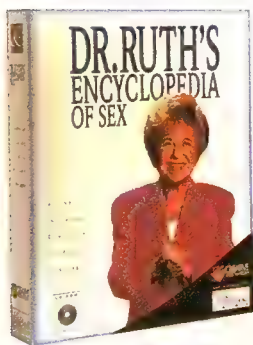
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Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia Of Sex

Though film, sound, images and text, Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia of Sex brings together all the knowledge one needs to be sexually literate in the 90's.

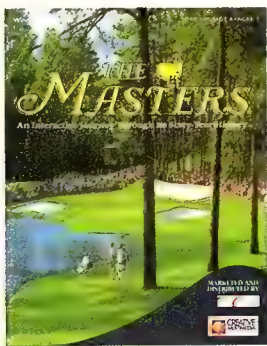
IBM/PC CD-ROM RRP £19.99



The Masters

This informative and entertaining product will keep you captivated with hundreds of images, live action video, player interviews, history of the tournament and a challenging trivia game.

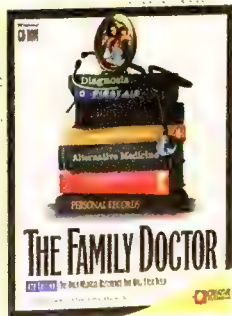
IBM/PC CD-ROM RRP £19.99



The Family Doctor IV

This innovative program provides medical information 24 hours a day and valuable information and insight into your family's health; all in an easy to understand, credible medical guide.

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Dreams Of Flight

Explore the most fascinating and far reaching technological story of all time - the development of flight. See history through the eyes of those who made it.

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EXPLORE THE WORLD OF MULTIMEDIA



Creative Multimedia is dedicated to bringing the highest quality multimedia products to the largest audience possible, and now in association with CentreGold Multimedia bring their titles to the UK. Creative Multimedia are aware of the current state of multimedia products and the fact that few, if any, of the available offerings exploit the medium to its fullest, and are committed to creating products that use and showcase the technology available.

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Whether you're a serious film buff or just looking for the right movie, this product is a must. Quite simply it's the most fun, continually up-to-date entertainment guide for the whole family.

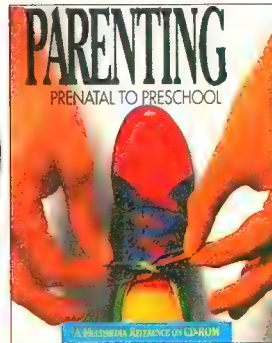
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Prenatal to pre-school - Like having the experts on call 24 hours a day. This innovative parenting tool is designed to provide immediate answers to the millions of questions asked by parents and would-be parents.

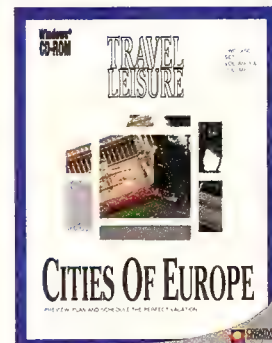
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The Great Cities of Europe is a two CD Set that allows you to explore 15 European cities. Features over 250 video segments and QuickTime Virtual Reality™ technology which allows you to explore famous sites in 360°.

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Mad? You bet! Stars in their Eyes

PC Review, in association with Warner Home Video and Millenium Software, must be mad to give away a barrel load of goodies that'll keep you amused for ages...

To celebrate the release of Mad Max 2 and Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome on sell-through video we're offering ten lucky readers the chance to win a copy of both videos. And if that's not enough, you will also get a copy of two of Millenium's PC CD-ROM titles, Scroll and Silverload for good measure.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these video packs, just jot down (on a postcard or sealed envelope) the answer to the question opposite and send it to: Barry Bill Competition, PC Review, Emap Images, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU, before November 15th.

THE QUESTION

What was the original name of the first Mad Max film?

- a) Mad Max
- b) Road Warrior
- c) Sad Bloke in Australia with a bad haircut and a car

An alien hunt has begun for a bunch of Bradford school children after university researchers linked robotic telescopes up to the Internet. Funded by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council, the project allows the youngsters to search space via cyberspace and is set for huge expansion with plans to link up with telescopes from all over the world.

Anyone with an internet connection and a yearning to reach for the stars should try tapping in to the world wide web site:

<http://www.eia.brad.ac.uk.rti/>

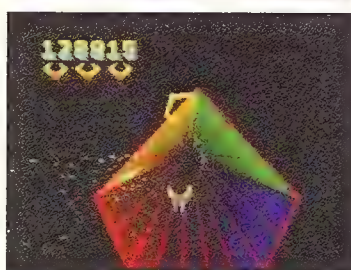
Console Kings Head for the PC

Two big console players have finally seen the light and are soon to make the jump into the PC games market. Both Sega and Atari are likely to release PC conversions of their Atari Jaguar and Sega Mega Drive games soon.

Sega is taking the ambitious step of producing Pentium only conversions. According to European Product Manager for Sega PC, Mr Hitendra Naik, this is to ensure that the games are up to a high enough quality (and no doubt, to prevent any possible competition with its consoles). Mr Naik explained that Sega spotted a gap in the PC market: "The PC is very big on flight sims and adventures, but lacking when it comes to fast arcade action — we want to plug that gap."

Planned releases include Ecco the Dolphin and Sonic the Hedgehog. Both are admittedly classics but are getting a bit long in the tooth. Mr Naik though is confident the Pentium-playing public will accept these oldies, particularly after Sega soups-up the sound and graphic quality. Mr Naik explained that Sega also aims to get round the PCs current loading problems and bring the instant "plug and play" ethos gamers found on the Mega Drive to the PC.

Atari has spent a good couple of years trying to conquer the console market against stiff competition with its 64-bit Jaguar and Atari spokesman, Peter Walker was quite frank about the

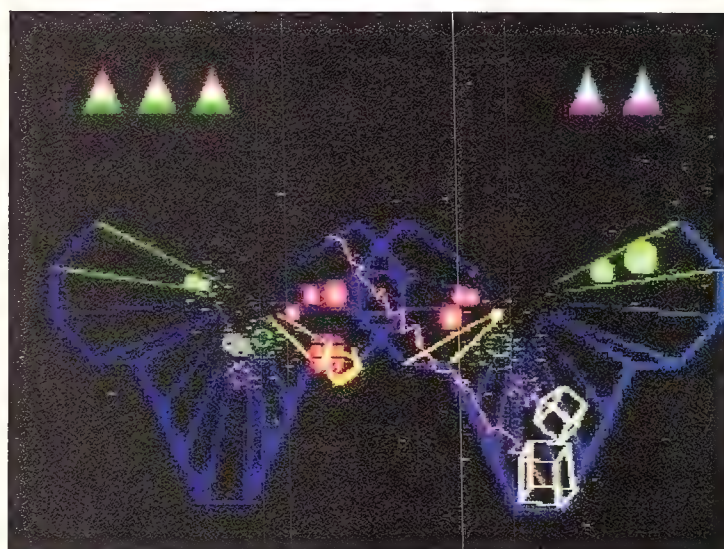


▲ **Tempest 2000 was regarded as the best Jaguar game.**

reasoning behind the move: "We want to pull in more revenue," he said. "We have got a lot of software which is just too good to restrict to one format."

Mr Walker was also quite candid about what he thought of the current state of the console market: "Unprofitable," he exclaimed.

"I can't see a dominant console emerging before 1997. The market was saturated by 16-bit machines and the current crop of consoles does not have software of a high enough quality to



▲ **It also offered two-player action, although it will be interesting to see if Atari adds a network mode.**

warrant the high prices being asked." Mr Naik was slightly more optimistic claiming the next generation consoles would start proving their real worth around Christmas 1996: "It will take until then for the games to reach their peak," he said.

All in the PC garden isn't entirely rosy either though, according to Mr Walker. He admitted that the PC user base was growing, but added scathingly that there were too many publishers putting out too many mediocre products. "To

get anywhere in that market, I believe you have to have a hit or not be in it. The market is now mature enough to tell the difference between a good and an average product — we're above average."

Atari has not yet decided what titles it plans to release or what percentage of its total future products will be PC (although Tempest 2000 is tipped to be the first with Attack of the Mutant Penguins following hard on its heels) but most assuredly, once they've decided, we'll let you know.

Viva Espana

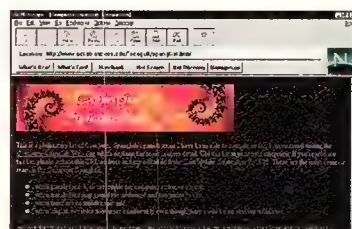
Latin America is going compu-babble crazy with hundreds of Spanish net boffins coming up with a whole new techy language which has been dubbed Spanglish and is based on English computer jargon.

List freaks who want to gen up on this all new language can find choice 'Spanglish' examples (including a dictionary) on the Web at:

<http://www.actlab.utexas.edu/~seagull/spanglist.html>.

But don't expect to be able to use it at your local dinner party — nobody'll understand a word you say.

This is the site to go to if you're interested in languages, but even Esperanto failed, don't forget. ▶



Even better than the real thing

Virtual reality has been talked about for years now, so it's good to see the first commercial headsets finally appearing on the market.

There are three currently available — i-glasses from Virtual i-O, the CyberMaxx from Euro Direct and Forte's VFX1 from Zye Technology.

Virtual fashion

At the light-weight end of the scale is Virtual i-O's i-glasses (£899 from ICE, 01453 823023) offering the full VR experience at a weight of only 8oz. More a pair of wrap-around shades with headphones drooped over your ears, than a full-immersion VR headset, the i-glasses give the advantages of VR without the neck and eye-strain people tend to worry about. You can have the headset with or without a visor in front, so you can shut out the world or look through the image at your desk/keyboard.

High fashion

Of all the units, Virtual i-O's is the coolest-looking, and least intimidating. Whether the experience is as good with tiny headphones and smaller field of view than its rivals is the questionable part, though. There's nothing wrong with the picture but, as with all the headsets, you shouldn't expect SVGA graphics and a perfect image. It's more like a traditional

laptop screen than a 17" hi-res monitor.

The great thing about VR is the tracking: you move your head, and the headset shifts the image so that you're actually looking around the virtual environment. Smart-tastic you might say, but there's still a catch. i-glasses, and to a lesser extent the middle of the three kits, the CyberMaxx don't track instantly, and the tiny time lag between head movement and the image updating can be a drag, especially if you're frantically looking around, as tends to happen in Doom, for example.

Maxx-i-mum

The CyberMaxx (details from Euro Direct — (0171) 833 2345, priced at £749) is a slightly heavier piece of equipment, but totally encases your eyes. As with each of the headsets, there's still plenty of room for most glasses, and focus controls help ensure a clear picture, but the CyberMaxx goes to some lengths to make sure the gear is comfy around the head too. There's a series of adjustments including a worrying-looking ratchet arrangement on top, and we're not sure that it actually works that well, being basically front-heavy no matter what you do.

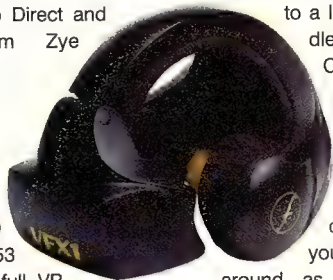
Image-wise it's far closer to totally blocking out reality than the VR specs.

Forte's fortune

Still, the CyberMaxx is not a patch on Forte's VFX1 (from Zye Technology (01293 531221) at £549), which is a huge motorcycling helmet of an arrangement, as unwieldy to install as it looks on your head. In use, it's actually very comfortable, and the image is excellent. It also has the option of being upgraded as the technology improves, although it already looks and sounds the best.

Okay, so it's a lot of bananas no matter which option you go for, but if you're going to get with the VR generation, then this is one experience which will just get better and better. Whether you like Descent or Doom, Magic Carpet or Flight Unlimited, VR is one hell of a thrill.

◀ Yes, you too can look like this when you go to Sainsburys.



GALLUP PC CHARTS

FULL PRICE

Update on the latest best-selling software available for your PC

TM	LM	TITLE	BY	CHANGE
1	(1)	X-Wing Triple Pack	US Gold	*
2	(3)	Sim City 2000	Maxis	▲
3	(2)	Doom II	Virgin	▼
4	(15)	Ultimate Doom	GT	▲
5	(-)	Mavis Beacon 2	Mindscape	●
6	(-)	Autoroute	Microsoft	●
7	(12)	Player Manager 2	Anco	▲
8	(-)	Microsoft Flight Simulator	Microsoft	●
9	(13)	Theme Park	Bullfrog	▲
10	(11)	Tie Fighter	LucasArts	▲
11	(16)	Comanche Super Pack	US Gold	▲
12	(-)	Best of Windows Ent.	Microsoft	●
13	(-)	Microsoft Golf for Windows	Microsoft	●
14	(-)	Encyclopedia of Science	Dorling Kindersley	●
15	(6)	FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts	▼
16	(10)	Premier Manager 3	Gremlin	▼
17	(17)	Discworld	Psygnosis	*
18	(4)	Ultimate Soccer Manager	Impressions	▼
19	(-)	Scrabble	US Gold	●
20	(14)	Fantasy Manager	Anco	▼

CD-ROM

1	(-)	The 7th Guest	The White Label	●
2	(-)	Mech Warrior 2	Activision	●
3	(1)	Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity	Microprose	▼
4	(4)	Indy Car Racing	The White Label	*
5	(-)	Day of the Tentacle	The White Label	●
6	(5)	Dark Forces	LucasArts	▼
7	(-)	Apache Longbow	Digital Integration	●
8	(3)	Terminal Velocity	US Gold	▼
9	(6)	Discworld	Psygnosis	▼
10	(-)	Primal Rage	Time Warner	●

BUDGET

1	(2)	Brian Lara's Cricket	Audiogenic	▲
2	(1)	Magic Boy	Empire	▼
3	(3)	Dawn Patrol	Empire	*
4	(-)	Day of the Tentacle	The WhiteLabel	●
5	(-)	Windows French	Premier Collection	●
6	(-)	Cyclones	Mindscape	●
7	(-)	Syndicate	Hit Squad	●
8	(7)	Easy To Learn Computing	Premier Collection	▼
9	(6)	Dune 2	Hit Squad	▼
10	(-)	Space Hulk	Hit Squad	●

KEY: TM = THIS MONTH, LM = LAST MONTH

UP = ▲ DOWN = ▼ NO CHANGE = * NEW ENTRY = ● RE-ENTRY = ■

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The end to Doom too's marks a new epoch in gameplay. Legendary masters of the action game - id Software have joined forces with Raven, delved deep into their collective twisted psyches and given birth to this spellbinding terrifying monster of a blast fest - the darkest, deadliest and best kept secret of 1995.



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Edinburgh: Cyber City

It's Scotland's capital, it's home to the world's biggest arts festival, and it's also regarded as Britain's 'most wired' city. Adam Peters reports from both sides of Edinburgh's digital divide...

I wander down Princes Street. To the left is Edinburgh Castle. I view it from the side, then from above, then sample some of its history. I pause to check out the latest festival reviews in *The Scotsman* and *The Guardian*.

Not that I'm in Edinburgh. Not at the moment. I'm still sitting at a desk in the PCR offices on the Internet checking out the vast wealth of information about Scotland's capital. Why? Because Edinburgh is supposedly the most wired-up city in the world.

Simply net surfing isn't the way we do things here. These features are all about propping up the bar in Inter City trains at six in the morning; about the photographer showing off the power of his flash by shooting it in the eyes of hapless jugglers; about spreading the word of PC Review to foreign regions in a less than diplomatic fashion. In short, these features are all about GOING THERE.

The first thing that strikes us on exiting Waverley station is a wayward fris-

bee. The second thing is the lack of jugglers or indeed any evidence that there's a festival going on. But, we're not here for the festival, we're here to verify these facts:

1) Edinburgh was at the forefront of British Internet development. TRUE. *Edinburgh University was one of the original five sites for JANET (Joint Academic Network — the first British computer link-up).*

2) Edinburgh has a hefty presence on the Net. TRUE. *It was the first British city to have an on-line guidebook. You can find out a lot more about these elsewhere in this feature along with all the necessary addresses.*

3) Edinburgh is an important city for computer technology. TRUE. *There is such a high concentration of IT development companies on the outskirts of the city that the area has earned the nickname 'Silicon Glen'.*

4) Edinburgh has three Internet cafés. FALSE. *It only has two. But that's still more than central London (one) and Glasgow (none). Indeed, it's more than any other city except, bizarrely, Birmingham.*

5) Edinburgh has great pubs and beer. TRUE. *In our first port of call we sample Gillespie's, the local stout. If you buy four pints in total from a list of ten pubs, you get your fifth pint free. Bad news. There's also an offer where you get a free 24-exposure film if you order a double Drambuie.*

Café society

A major shock on entering Edinburgh's Cyberia café is seeing how much bigger and less intimidating it seems in comparison to its London cousin. There are only three branches of the original Internet café chain at present, but as Gavin Nicholson, the owner of the Edinburgh branch, has bought the franchise rights for everywhere north of

Newcastle and Carlisle, there's more on the way. "We're setting up in Glasgow at the moment," says Gavin, "and hope to open in Newcastle after that."

After reeling off a few snaps and rummaging around in his bag for a while, the photographer sheepishly asks us to keep an eye on his camera and tripod. He disappears, and resurfaces ten minutes later stinking of Drambuie.

Web 13, the other Internet café, has a more 'alternative' ambience than Cyberia. At least, that's according to the German girl we met. (She's doing a PhD in 'The Cyberpunk Writing of Billy Idol'.) It seems pretty similar to us. The proprietor, Ian McCarron, claims to have set up Scotland's first Internet café. Although opening two days after Cyberia in April, he ran an outdoor Internet café in March for the Edinburgh Science Festival. Of Web 13, Ian says that he "just wanted a little café, but it's grown out of all proportion".



Currie favour

Our third contact, Ken Currie, is the man who originally suggested to the city council that they should put their guidebook on the Internet. Or rather, get him to do it for them. As a researcher at the Esmée Fairbairn Research Centre at Heriot-Watt University, Ken spends most of his working day on the Internet. He's also the managing director of KMRA Ltd, a computer consultancy, and has put many companies on-line, including the book publishers Hobson's.

With our team of experts complete, we thought the best way to get the bottom of Edinburgh, the Internet and the general mysteries of life, was to ask them all

roughly the same questions. We'll see where there's a consensus of opinion, and also where issues of disagreement still exist. You'll find these responses elsewhere in the feature.

In the meantime, you'll be glad to hear that we eventually found the festival after much searching. Or at least, the main comedy venue. The microphone, PA and banners were still there, but the place was deserted. Well, it was four in the morning. They were still serving though. Typical, really — by the time we find the festival, all it consists of is us drinking beer in an empty auditorium.

It's a hard life, readers.

Go forth and multiply

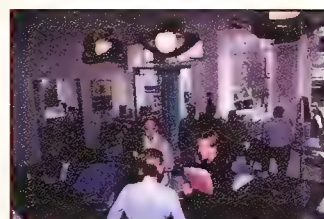
CYBERIA

Opened on 12th April this year and located just off the main shopping street (84-88 Hanover Street), Cyberia is open 10am-10pm seven days a week. It's substantially larger than the London version, and offers eight different types of coffee, cheap Internet rates (from £1.50 per half-hour), training sessions for pensioners, women-only nights and a club called Cyborg playing hard techno music late on Friday nights.

<http://www.edin.easynet.co.uk/>



▲ **More net-sense than fashion at Cyberia.**



▲ **Net-heads without terminals. Lost, confused and lonely.**

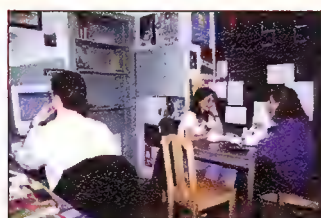
WEB 13

Scotland's second Internet café by a matter of two days, Web 13 is located in the trendier south part of the city centre. Standard Internet rates are £4 per hour. Opening hours are the same as Cyberia's, and it's located at 13 Bread Street.

<http://www.presence.co.uk/>

EDWEB & CITY GUIDE

The main Edinburgh web site compiled on behalf of the city council by the Esmée Fairbairn Research



▲ **Very studenty, but a neat place to visit.**



▲ **Looks like the bloke on the left needs to find diet-web.**

Centre. The central part is an Internet version of a popular local guidebook, complete with maps and information on all the local sights and amenities. The alphabetical index consists of over a thousand entries including the official city census.

<http://www.ehr.hw.ac.uk/EDC/Edinburgh.html>

AERIAL PHOTOS

Run by the Geography Department at Edinburgh University, this site features loads of downloadable aerial photos of the city and its sights.

<http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/their/edintour.html>

THE EDINBURGH MALT WHISKY TOUR

The best Internet site in the world! Incredibly comprehensive, with links to loads of other pages, an interactive map and information on every brewery and every whisky ever going back hundreds of years.

<http://www.dcs.ed.ac.uk/home/jhb/whisky/index.html>

Plant



OR



Plant?

Imagine if you controlled land that contained some of the world's largest natural resources. How would you use that power?

Would you do anything you could to protect the natural environment from change...or would you send in the development teams to exploit the environment to your own ends?



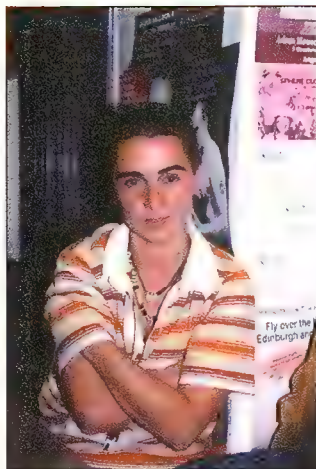
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So what do the punters think?



"Edinburgh is absolutely miles ahead of everywhere else for the Internet. We've got two cafés within streets of each other, and one of the biggest web sites in the world."

Avril Brown, 28
network manager



"There are so many different sub-cultures in this city. You've got the students, the computer programmers... Web 13 is a bit like a community centre for different groups."

Alexis K, 25
art student



"TV is dead, long live the Net! The future of the Internet lies with local services. There is so much happening in Edinburgh, and so much of it is on the Net."

Nick L, 26
multimedia developer

Edinburgh: The Great Debate

Why Edinburgh? Where next? What about porn? Café rivalries? Pubs and bookshops going on-line? Three of Cyber City's leading lights tell it how they see it...

Why Edinburgh?

Gavin: It's a very cosmopolitan city, not just during the festival but all year round. It's a capital city and the third biggest financial centre in Europe (after London and Frankfurt), with three universities and a very computer literate population. It's also a tourist city — the Scottish Tourist Board puts a lot of money into the Net — and there are a lot of American visitors too, many of whom come into the cafés to check up on their e-mail.

Ian: The festival certainly makes a difference, bringing audiences and performers from around the world along with loads of journalists who need to modern back their reviews. The whole city's so much busier at festival time. Web 13's turnover doubled during that period. We've even had Americans getting taxis straight from the airport to the café.

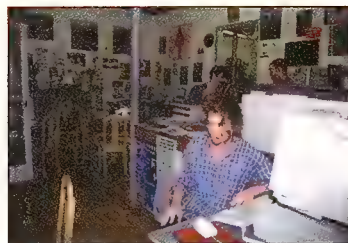
Ken: It helps that Edinburgh University has one of the best Computing and AI courses in Britain. It's in the top three overall, on a par with Cambridge. This is a small city, but with a big student population, particularly science and technology oriented.

The Net today

Gavin: The Internet is changing every day, getting bigger. People are finding their own uses for it. We had someone in who makes violins and mandolins. Apparently, there's a special technique some bloke in Italy uses. Our customer wanted to find out, and he managed to get in touch with the bloke through the newsgroups and the guy sent him all the information. We get a nine year-old girl in a lot who uses the Net for her geography homework.

Ian: The best phrase to describe the Internet now is "a library with all the lights turned out". It's still very young and people need to be pointed in the right direction. The rapid growth in the past year has caught a lot of people on the hop — computer manufacturers, retailers, etc — and it's taking them a while to catch up.

Ken: My company, KMRA, recently put up the UCAS student clearing service for Hobson's the publisher. All data is in a database and can be accessed and searched according to needs. That's a good example of the sort of data-oriented WWW services that are starting to take off at the moment.



▲ Hey, there's no rivalry between cafés. Just a the occasional dig and threat of all-out network Doom warfare.

Café rivalry

Gavin: The background is that Ian went to see Cyberia in London who were interested in arranging a franchise for Scotland. They provided him with all the information on setting up a café and got to him to sign a contract. This stated that if he decided not to buy the franchise then he wouldn't set up his own

café, using the information he got off them, until a set time period had passed. When I bought the franchise I had to get the café open quickly before his restraining contract expired. In the end we opened two days before him. To be honest, I don't see how they keep going.

Ian: If there's any rivalry it comes from Cyberia's side, not ours. I was originally going to call my café Netcafé until I got a call from Nescafé's lawyers. I suspect they may have been tipped off by 'that English franchise' (Cyberia). Edinburgh's big enough for the both of us. If not, we challenge them to a game of Network Doom any time.

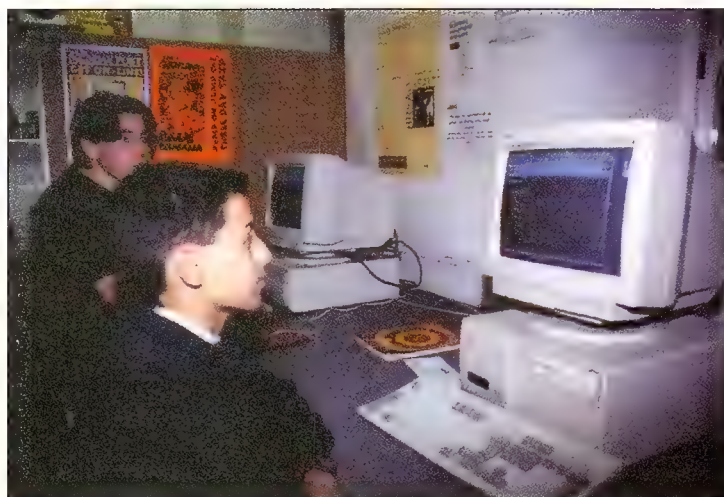
Ken: I'm not taking sides, because EdWeb will dominate. It's the definitive Net-guide to Edinburgh. The cafés have their guides, but ours is better.

And next is?

Gavin: That's the \$64,000 question — what happens to the cafés in two years time when everyone has Internet access at home? I think the cafés will survive by always having the very latest technology, being somewhere that people can try stuff out. I also think the social aspects of a café appeal to people. I know some bookshops are starting to run Internet terminals, but I don't think bookshops have the appeal of cafés — they're too quiet and reflective. As for pubs, I don't think ten pints of lager and a computer go together. Plus you'd be cutting out the under 18s, an age group likely to see a big growth in Net usage.

Ian: There will always be people who can't afford their own PCs, people who are travelling, etc. As for outlets, I think anywhere would be fine except pubs. Alcohol and the Internet don't go together. You'd be asking for problems.

Ken: When the cable companies start getting more involved, I think the importance of cafés such as these will lessen. They may still have a role to play of course, but the cable companies' involvement will change the possibilities for Internet access.



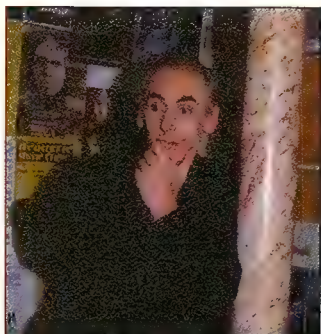
▲ I mean look at that, the bloke in the background's either dead nousey or doesn't know what he's doing, so he's snooping instead. Tut, tut.

Meet the Panel...



GAVIN NICHOLSON

Past: Director of a major food supply company. **Present:** Owns the Cyberia franchise for Scotland and the far north of England. Runs the Edinburgh café. **Future:** Wants to open a café in fishing mecca Stornoway (in the Outer Hebrides) for when he retires.



IAN MCCORRAN

Past: Worked in AIDS/HIV research at Edinburgh City Hospital. **Present:** Runs Web 13, an Internet café whose home page recently hit a massive 39,000 calls a day. **Future:** Would like to run Web 13 by computer from Goa, India. ("I'm just an old hippy.")



KEN CURRIE

Past: The only panelist with a real computing background; studied Physics and Artificial Intelligence at Edinburgh Uni. **Present:** Senior Research Fellow at Esmée Fairbairn Centre. Put the city council on-line. **Future:** "Raith Rovers winning the UEFA Cup." (Hmm...)

Internet porn

Gavin: I take a fairly liberal view. If there's 18 million people with access to the Net, it's going to reflect that diversity of views. If porn is legal in every other country in Europe, why should I ban it? There's not much porn on the World Wide Web anyway, it's mostly on BBSs and isn't very easy to get hold of.

Ian: If we see someone downloading porn in the café, they are promptly asked to leave. You can't blame the Internet itself though, the same way you can't blame the Royal Mail if someone sends rude mags through the post.

Ken: As an Internet user for the past 15 years, let me say that all the junk on the Net will be weeded out. The more commercial the Net becomes, the more the flea market nature will diminish.

Wired women

Gavin: Computers are a male dominated arena. Whilst 50% of the people doing Computing GCSE are women, only 30% of those doing the A-level are, and on university courses that figure drops to 3.5%. The Net has its roots in the military and academia, and there are a lot of American prats on it who are hostile towards women.

Ian: Our café is one of the few places in the city where a woman can come in the evening, sit alone and not be out of place. We do attract a lot of single females. There are a lot of women doing our Internet courses, whereas men tend to take the attitude that they can work it all out themselves.

Ken: I hope the social benefits of the Internet for everyone dominate. Scotland is on the periphery of Europe but has a very strong culture and identity, which the Internet is helping to reinforce. If countries can do it, genders and social groups can too.

The future

Gavin: I don't think the Internet is going to stay as it is for long. There's so much money coming in from big business. Video on demand is on the way in and everything's going to become more commercial. We'll also have voice recognition software which will mean you won't need a keyboard.

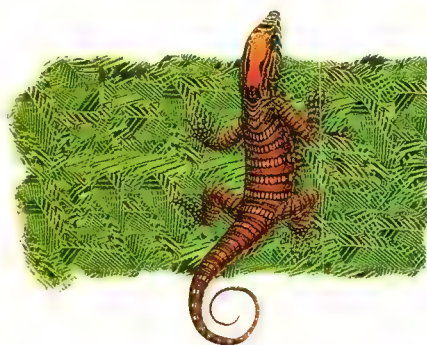
Ian: Everything's going to become a lot more commercial and slicker. Big business is definitely taking over the Internet, but the growth is going to be good for small groups and countries like Scotland. The Internet lets small nations speak loud words.

Ken: It's difficult to predict future developments. I'm not a great fan of video on demand, I think information centred development is of more excitement. We'll get an easier system, faster connections, wider bandwidths... but I've spent eight years in AI research and I now don't think I'll live to see the day when computers understand me speaking to them and reply verbally.

Economy



or



Ecology?

Imagine if you controlled land that contained some of the world's largest natural resources. How would you use that power?

Would you fight to ensure the survival of endangered species and rainforests...or would you hack, burn and drill in your quest to unearth the natural riches below?



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Watch out Virgin, Electronic Arts et al... Microsoft has entered the games market. Cal Jones met Tony Garcia, head of Microsoft's new games division, to find out just how he plans to take on the big guns.



Game fight at the MS Coral



▲ Welcome to Microsoft. Based in Redmond, near Seattle, Microsoft's HQ is the centre for most of its software design and development.



▲ Microsoft doesn't have an office, it has a "campus". As well as its offices, it boasts cafeterias, jogging trails, gyms and even a shop.



▲ You can't walk across the campus without encountering waterfalls and fountains.

Tony Garcia knows a thing or two about games. He ought to, having spent 15 years of his life working in the games industry. His career has included spells at Sega, where he worked on the first range of Mega Drive products, and LucasArts, where he produced Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe and co-produced Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis with Hal Barwood. His experience is unquestionable. Which is just as well, because Garcia is the man who has been charged with the onerous task of steering Microsoft to glory in an already crowded games market. As he puts it, "It's good to be the underdog again."

But how can anyone even think of describing the all-conquering Microsoft as an underdog? Garcia is obviously no fool. However large, however successful Microsoft is, the company is still a wet-behind-the-ears novice when it comes to games.

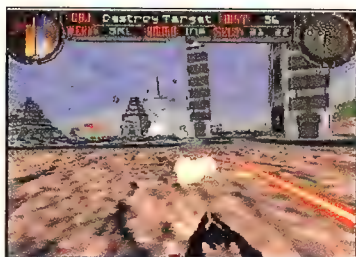
Microsoft has largely ignored the games market up until now, preferring to concentrate on Windows, "serious" applications such as Word and Excel and the occasional bit of edutainment or multimedia software. Why, then, is the company suddenly?

Micro Culture

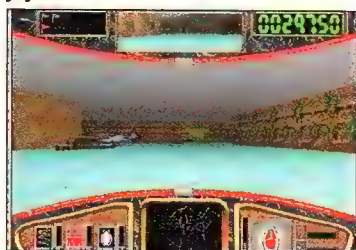
Windows 95 might just have a bit to do with it. Microsoft is convinced that it will make PC games accessible to a wider audience, namely those who were put off playing games because of the difficulties of getting them to run under DOS.

Then there's image — the fact that it's now socially acceptable to play games. Five or six years ago, if you played games you certainly didn't mention it in public for fear of being labelled an "anorak". Nowadays, however, games are far more sophisticated, and with titles such as Doom, Sim City 2000 and the various big-budget interactive movies getting coverage in the national press, more and more people are taking an interest. Computer games are no longer a cottage industry. They're big business, and Microsoft wants to join in.

Microsoft isn't entirely new to entertainment software, mind you. Flight



▲ **Fury 3 works well with the new Microsoft Sidewinder 3D Pro joystick.**



▲ **Hover, which comes with Win 95, is an experimental project from the Microsoft games team.**

Simulator has enjoyed phenomenal success over the years, while Space Simulator and Golf have also sold well. Even the Windows Entertainment Packs (collections of simple, five-minute games) haven't done too badly, despite the fact that Garcia says that they "really are bad products." Which just goes to show how much people trust the Microsoft brandname.

However, with the exception of the Entertainment Packs, these titles are all serious simulations rather than out-and-out games. Garcia's job, then, is to broaden the range, but this is a far more difficult task than you might think. Even though Microsoft has a good team of programmers and no shortage of cash to spend on getting into the games market, it has little experience when it comes to producing the games themselves. "We're not up to speed on games programming," he admits. "Our programmers will write efficient games but whether they'll be fun still remains to be seen."

Developing partnerships

Consequently, the company's initial strategy was to find experienced development partners to write games under the Microsoft name. So far they've signed up Larry Holland, formerly of LucasArts, Access (the company responsible for Links and Under a Killing Moon) and British developer Argonaut (Creature Shock and FX Fighter) — an impressive line-up to say the least. And, with Argonaut's Brender development, things look promising.

But Garcia still thinks that Microsoft is taking a gamble. "This business is not a science; no-one knows how to make a hit. It's a crap shoot. We can take our

Joysticks

Microsoft certainly seems determined to take the games market by storm. Not content with simply publishing the games themselves, it has also produced two joysticks, the Sidewinder and the Sidewinder 3D Pro. Of the two, the 3D Pro is the most remarkable. Most older joysticks use devices called potentiometers to detect movement, but the 3D Pro contains an optical digital camera and LEDs which are far more precise and reliable — it effectively eliminates drift. Based on digital technology, it is also faster than older joysticks because it goes into digital overdrive when put through the joystick port. Put it this way: if you play a fast game on a 486 using an older joystick, the processor can spend up to 25 per cent of its time trying to read the stick's movements. The 3D Pro has an advanced interface mode which means that it takes up less processor time, thus avoiding slowing down the game.

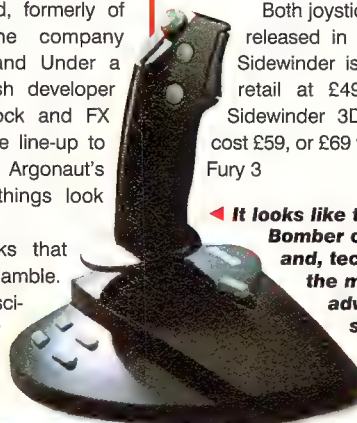
Another new feature is the rotation. As well as the usual hat, trigger and buttons, you can also twist the stick left and right. This is useful for games such as tank sims, in which your vehicle can be moving in one direction while the gun turret is facing in another. Activision's Mechwarrior 2 is the first game to make use of this feature, although Fury 3 also takes advantage of it.

The Sidewinder 3D Pro is designed for use with Windows 95 but Microsoft claims that it will operate under DOS without any additional patches or drivers. It also has a switch which allows it to emulate the Flightstick Pro and Thrustmaster joysticks for games that support them.

The Sidewinder is less remarkable — a solid, Flightstick Pro compatible stick based on existing digital technology. It does, however, include the same rotate feature as the 3D Pro, so whilst it isn't quite as fast or accurate, it still has something that every other joystick manufactured lacks.

Both joysticks should be released in October. The Sidewinder is expected to retail at £49, whilst the Sidewinder 3D Pro should cost £59, or £69 with a copy of Fury 3

◀ **It looks like the Stealth Bomber of joysticks and, technically, is the most advanced sub-£100 controller.**



The decision is yours, naturally.

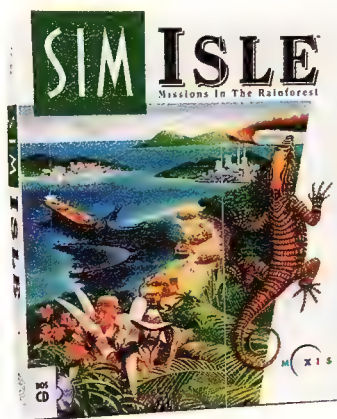
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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- PC DOS CD-ROM ● IBM486 or above ●
- MS-DOS 5.0 or above ● 8MB RAM
- CD-ROM drive ● Hard disk ● Microsoft Mouse

A developer's view

So what is it like to develop games for Windows 95? Is it really as convenient as Microsoft would have us believe? I spoke to Richard Leinfellner, software development manager at Mindscape and the man in charge of its Windows 95 games Warhammer (previewed in Issue 48) and Cyberspeed.

PCR: When did you decide to write games for Windows 95?

RL: We started work on both games in May 1994.

PCR: Was Microsoft helpful?

RL: Very. We received the first Beta copy of Windows 95 just under a year ago, and had pre-Beta software before that. Microsoft made it easy for us. We were invited over to Seattle to use Microsoft's labs, and we were given our own room which was lockable so only we could get access to our work.

PCR: Did you experience any problems?

RL: The main problem was that we were working with pre-Beta copies of Windows 95. If we found a bug we couldn't always tell whether it was ours or Microsoft's. It's putting uncertainty on top of uncertainty. But these are the chances you have to take when you want to be at the cutting edge.

PCR: Does Windows 95 have any particular advantages for games developers?

RL: It solves some problems and creates others. Every DOS machine is set up differently, so you have to write all the drivers yourself, but in Windows 95 they're already there. That saves a lot of time. You do have to allow for memory in Windows 95 because it uses around 8MB on its own, but the nice thing is that if the user has less than you require, the game will still run although it will be slow.

The downside is that if you need that extra per cent, you have to hit the hardware directly and that's a far easier in DOS. But the downside is made up for by the upside.



▲ A flag! Excitement! Hover is hardly the most auspicious start for Microsoft's games campaign.



▲ Fury 3 involves a lot of shooting, plenty of explosions. It's still like Terminal Velocity for Windows.

best guesses, but the customers always decide."

Microsoft will concentrate on using its external developers until the in-house team, which includes people poached from companies such as Acclaim, Electronic Arts and Virgin, is up and running. "We think that internal development is something we're going to build up, but we'll continue to use a mixture of internal and external to avoid too much similarity between products."

Garcia is keen to keep game styles as varied as possible. As a result, Microsoft will continue to use external developers even when its own team is established. External developers are encouraged to bring their own influences and ideas to Microsoft because it helps introduce variety into the product line-up.

Still, Microsoft wouldn't be the first company to try and enter the games

scene by signing up titles from external sources. According to Garcia, a lot of large companies suddenly decide that games are where it's at and then proceed to run around with a cheque book buying up titles that could very well turn out to be second-rate. Microsoft, however, already knows computers very well. Being just about the biggest name in the computer industry has its advantages — Garcia claims that developers often approach Microsoft rather than the other way around. Of course, Microsoft must have done a fair bit of cheque book waving itself to attract the likes of Larry Holland, but Garcia thinks that the Microsoft name and reputation, not to mention its extensive testing facilities, also has a fair bit to do with it.

Money talks

Since Microsoft clearly isn't short of a bob or two, isn't the company tempted to invest big bucks in a lavish, star-studded interactive movie? It seems not. Despite the massive media attention surrounding multimillion dollar productions such as Electronic Arts' The Darkening and Origin's Wing Commander IV, Garcia is dismissive of the current fad for interactive movies. "Anytime you introduce video you reduce interactivity," he claims. "Games are about the player having control of the experience, but in movies it is the director who has control." Movies, he thinks, have their place in entertainment so long as they are confined to the cin-

ema or video. When they appear on the PC masquerading as games, it usually proves an unsatisfying experience for the player.

So if interactive movies are out, what types of game is Microsoft investing in? Garcia is convinced that there will be a big growth in multiplayer games. "The multiplayer market is huge, and Microsoft will take advantage of it."

Consequently, Microsoft has spent a lot of money developing PlayerNet, a system which allows gamers to play each other on-line. Of course, there already exist a number of on-line gaming services, but PlayerNet differs in that it doesn't limit the number of people who can compete against each other. The maximum number is dictated by the individual programs themselves. For example, Microsoft Golf 2.0 allows for up to eight players, but if Microsoft designed a 72 player game, it would be catered for on PlayerNet.

The way PlayerNet works is that if, say, you fancied a game of golf, you could use PlayerNet to find a game in progress and then join in. This cuts down on time wasted browsing the net. It also allows you to find players involved in other types of games, say flight sims, and then invite them to play the game of your choice.

Communication is obviously an important part of PlayerNet. In Golf 2.0, you can click the "Hurry" button if your opponent is taking too long over a shot, and a digitised message will tell him to get his act in gear. "It should say 'Hurry up, you bastard,'" jokes Garcia.

PlayerNet will not be made available to external developers just yet, although it may be licensed out in the future. Microsoft's reasons for keeping

I have to admit I enjoyed playing Fury 3, but if you already own Terminal Velocity, are you going to want to buy this? Probably not, in all honesty. ▼



▲ It rained when I was there. The weather in Seattle, it seems, is more British than ours.



▲ Ten bucks to the guy who hits it through Bill's window. Twenty if it lands in his coffee.



▲ Fury 3, according to Garcia, shows Windows gaming in a whole new light.



PlayerNet under wraps are twofold: first, there are still some bugs that need ironing out. Secondly, and more to the point, if PlayerNet becomes very successful, Microsoft wants to keep hold of it for as long as possible so that it can gain an advantage.

Naturally, PlayerNet will only be available as part of Windows 95. Love it or loathe it, Microsoft's new operating system is the focus for all its game development. Despite scepticism from those who doubt Windows 95's suitability as a games platform, Garcia is convinced that it will help the PC beat the new generation of consoles in the games market. When the Mega Drive and SNES were released, they beat the PCs of the time hands down in terms of graphics, speed and user-friendliness. However, the new Pentiums are powerful enough to hold their own against consoles on the first two counts — it's just that MS-DOS is so difficult to use. If you simply want to play a game, which would you rather do: pop a cartridge or CD in your console and start playing, or spend ages messing around with your autoexec.bat and config.sys files, not to mention your IRQs?

Plug and Play

Windows 95 supposedly does away with all that. As well as the much-vaunted Plug and Play which (in theory) automatically detects what hardware you have installed, it also includes an auto-play feature which recognises when you've placed a CD in the drive. Playing a game should be a simple matter of turning on your machine, popping the CD in place and then getting on with it. Which, providing that it works in practice, will make the PC almost as easy to use as a console.

On top of this, Garcia sees the new consoles as having a limited lifespan. Unlike PCs, which have been around for a hell of a long time in one form or another, consoles are almost impossible to upgrade. PCs, in this respect, are a safe bet for most people, especially considering that the PC games market is

▲ **Microsoft prides itself on providing excellent amenities for its staff. We've got a coffee machine.**

already strong, whereas no-one is certain whether Sony's Playstation or Sega's Saturn will have the better products. In addition, consoles are not backwardly compatible with each other. A cartridge-based Mega Drive game will not work in the CD-based Saturn, for example, whereas old PC games should run under Windows 95. I say should because you'll find that many run slower and a few will not run at all — but that's better than nothing.

Microsoft isn't just targeting potential console buyers, though. A large number of people own or have access to PCs, but have been put-off buying games because of the aforementioned difficulties of getting them to run under DOS. Microsoft is hoping that Windows 95 will make games accessible to this group. However, unlike hardcore gamers who own top-of-the-range PCs, many of these people will be using slower machines and so Microsoft intends to make games scalable so that they will run comfortably on a 486, albeit with graphic detail turned down. Again, you'll have to take Microsoft's word for this, because the game I saw, *Fury 3*, was running on a 120MHz Pentium.

But although the theory sounds impressive, Microsoft had very little in the way of concrete evidence to show me. The games I saw were decent enough but hardly revolutionary — *Golf 2.0* (a nice but ordinary golf game which happens to be compatible with PlayerNet) and *Fury 3* (effectively *Terminal Velocity* for Windows 95). Without seeing more of the Microsoft games line-up, I have to agree with Garcia and conclude that Microsoft has a lot to learn before it can take on the likes of Electronic Arts and Virgin. However, the company does have the advantage of knowing its own operating system inside out, and we all know that what Microsoft wants, Microsoft usually gets in the end.



ASCON 

The dream starts here...

Personalise Windows 95

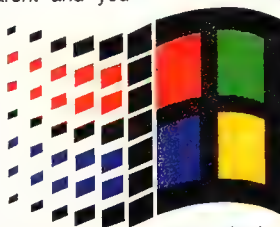
Once you've got over the initial excitement of using Windows 95, its glamour wears off quickly. The limitations become apparent and you find yourself looking for ways to tweak the system and improve or personalise it. Thankfully there are numerous ways to do just that and give Windows 95 a fresh sparkle.

In the panel on this page you'll find several tips to help you personalise your copy — we're currently compiling a monster list of such tips for a future issue, if you've got any send them in. These require a little work so, in the meantime, if you're looking for an

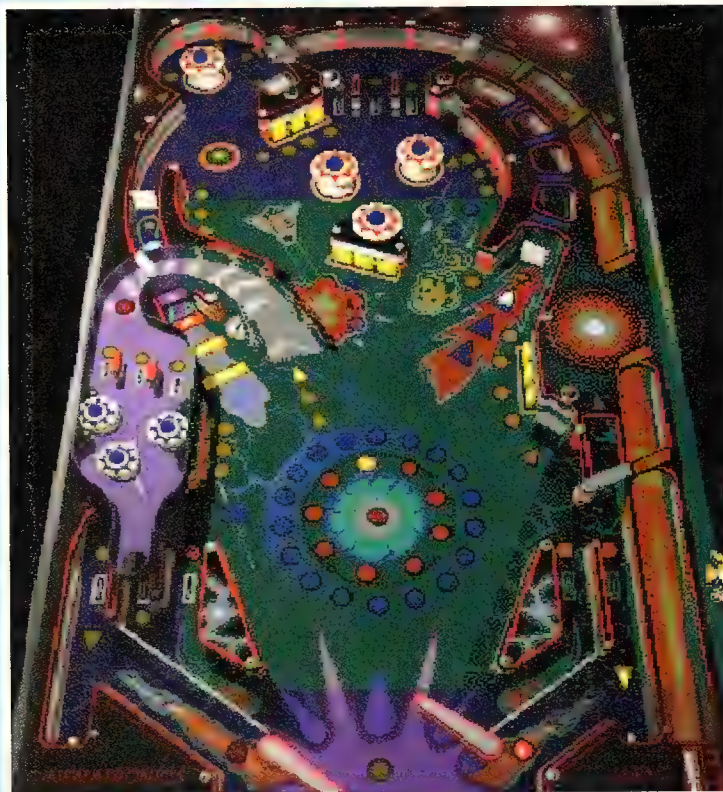
easy, all-in-one, way to tailor your system to your own needs, then the Microsoft Plus pack could be just what you want. Once installed you'll find

loads of new Desktop themes on your hard drive, just waiting to be utilised. There are also new screen savers, sound files, animated icons and some very stylish backdrops. As well as these, the Plus

pack also provides a load of new system icons, examples being a toaster for the trash can and a gold silicon chip for the Your Computer icon. On top of that, system enhancements include windows remaining visible as they are dragged around, although on slower



You've got Windows 95 installed, now what? Andy Leaning takes a first look at several programs that help you tweak your system and reveals a few tricks of his own.




systems this can make things a bit sluggish.


As if this lot wasn't enough it also comes with a 3D pinball game and an Internet Jumpstart program. If you want you can also set it up to automatically back up and clean your hard disk. Microsoft are on 01734 270001.


Almathera also has a similar package out called the Windows 95 companion. It's a CD packed with sound files, backdrops, and shareware utilities, tools and programs to tailor the system. Like Microsoft's Plus pack there's a utility to give solid windows when they're dragged around, and also a program to change the trash can to a toilet. The collection of applications, utilities and games is, however, made up largely of Windows 3.x programs and aren't designed for Windows 95 — and although they work, experienced Windows users will probably already have come across many of these before. You can contact Almathera on (0181) 687 0040.


These are the first collections we've come across, and you can be sure there will be more released over coming months and that we will be covering them as and when they come out.


PC Review Tricks


 Fancy changing the closing down screen? No sooner said than done. Start up the paintbrush accessory and create a 320 by 400 pixel image. Paint your picture or resize an existing picture to this size and save it as 256 colour bitmap with a filename of 'logow.sys' in the Windows folder. Now shut down the system to see the result.

 Fed up with that 'It's now safe to turn off your system' message? Just like the close down screen it can be easily changed. Create a 320 x 400 image and save it with a filename of 'logos.sys' again with 256 colours in the Windows folder.

 For quickly inserting frequently used text in Word 7 etc highlight some text and drag it to the desktop. In future just drag the icon to your document.

 Not really a Windows 95 trick, but useful all the same. When using MS-DOS under Windows 95 there are several new features. Previously the command 'CD..' would move back up a directory. This has been joined by 'CD..' and 'CD....' to move back up to the last directory but one, and the last directory but two. The three and four dot sequences can also be used in paths.

 Another MS-DOS trick is that it's now possible to run Windows applications from DOS, although they still start up in a Windows window. To run Windows applications just prefix the program name with 'Start.'

 Holding down the control key while double clicking on a directory name (when viewing the contents of a disk from 'my computer') shows the contents of that directory in the current window, rather than a new one. The backspace key takes you back to the previous directory.

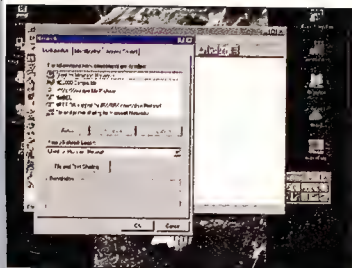


Windows 95

The diary continues...



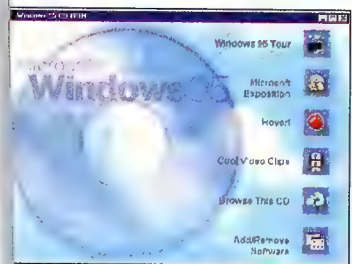
Having finally breathed life into the beast, Pat Fox battles on with Windows 95...



▲ **Network? What's one of them then? Oh, forget it.**

Day 3

After taking the rest of Tuesday off to recover from the shock of actually seeing Windows 95 working, I return withrepidation to the office, fearful of discovering some new horror lurking on my system.



▲ **Welcome to Windows 95 — don't have too much fun, now.**

47am

The time has come to see if Windows has managed to work out the setup of my system.

53am

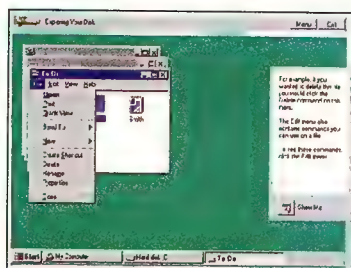
Well, stone me! Win95 has indeed managed to detect my soundcard, graphics card, and modem. But what's this? It is recognised that I am part of a network, but I can't connect to any of the other machines. How useful — a one-machine network.

830am

After poking and prodding amongst the Control Panel settings, and running away from the scary RegEdit program, I manage to contact Jim's machine. Intermittently. I give up.

The rest of the day...

I decide to try a bit of experimentation to see just how versatile this thing is. Most Windows 3.1 applications seem to function well enough, so that's not a problem. The other obvious test - Doom



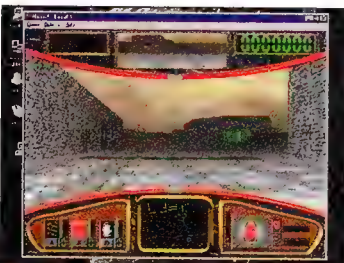
▲ **The Windows '95 tour: not too taxing on the brain.**

— runs without a hitch, although not in a window as I was led to believe. I am surprised to find that most DOS software runs fine. Hurrah!

Day 4, 9:55am

Microsoft have thoughtfully sent me a CD copy of Windows, after I just spent several days wrestling with dodgy floppies. Gee thanks. I opt for the Tour, which explains in words of one syllable how to operate this exciting new environment. Just about my level.

So everything is rosy in the garden of 95 — almost. Aside from a few DOS programs that require special treatment, Win95 seems capable of han-



▲ **I shouldn't think I'd be quaking in their boots (geddit?).**

dling just about everything. Is it as good as the hype? Sorry, but no. But you're going to have to buy it anyway. So tough.



▲ **Happy Days are here again — but why? We may never care.**

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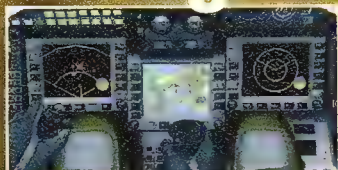
It's coming up to the festive season, and the games scene is really hotting up. This month TFX: EF2000 is reviewed, and there's a plethora of previews including the great Mortal Kombat 3.

Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Each review gives a single mark out of 10 to rate games. The score takes into account elements such as playability, graphics and sound. We aim to test to completion — where applicable. We're very tough on games: five is the halfway mark so anything rated higher is above average. A game must be exceptional to rate an eight or nine out of ten.

High Lights



TFX: EF2000	72
Phantasmagoria	78
Need For Speed	82
Primal Rage	93



CD ONLY

Publisher: Bullfrog/E.A.

Contact: (01753) 549442

Price: TBA

Expected release: December



Going underground

Dungeon Keeper: In Progress

Cal Jones ventures into Bullfrog's unique dungeon sim and discovers role-playing games aren't all dwarves, swords and dice-rolling.

Bullfrog's venture into the anorak-y realm of Dungeons & Dragons is a far cry from the typical role-playing game. It's not a visually bland, dice-throwing yawn-fest with Stunty the dwarf and his elven sidekick Wingnut, and likewise it's very different from first-person games like *Dungeon Master*

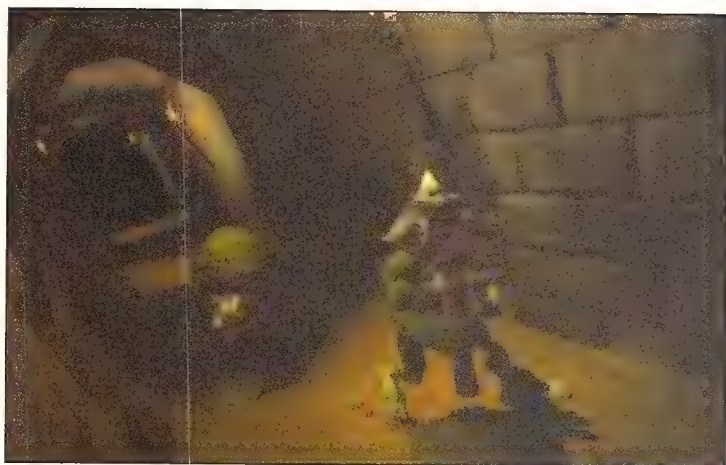
and the more recent *Stonekeep*. In fact *Dungeon Keeper* almost rewrites the rules of RPGs because rather than guiding a team of lantern-jawed adventurers around a booby-trapped underground cavern in search of hidden treasures, you actually control the dungeon itself.

So *Dungeon Keeper* is refreshingly original. Well, it is to some extent anyway. *Dungeon Keeper* could almost be described as 'Theme Park with Goblins', but rather than the fastest rollercoaster in the world, you are given a grotty cell, a little mana and a few gold coins with which to create your underground domain. By managing your meagre resources, hiring the odd orc guard and strategically placing the occasional snake pit you can gradually build up your rat-infested flea pit into the subterranean equivalent of the Savoy hotel, although don't expect the same level of room service — troglodytes are better at slaying than serving.

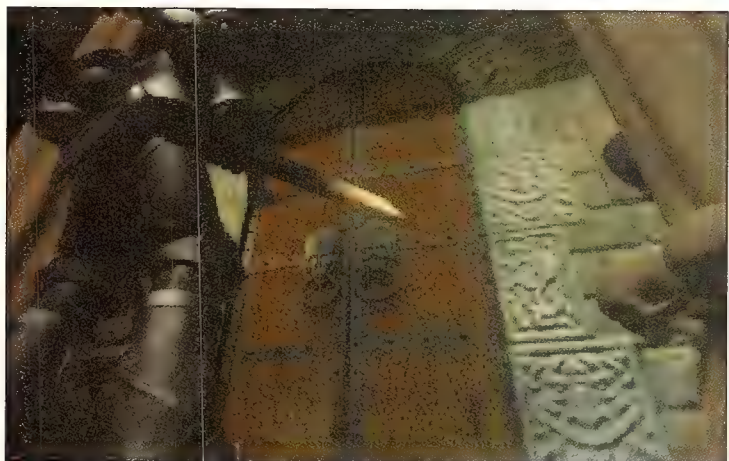
It seems five card stud is too complex for these intellectually-challenged meatheads, so you'll just have to make do with a game of Top Trumps.

A dungeon, no matter how impressive, is useless without adventurers to explore it though. Sword-swinging mercenaries are easily enticed by filling the dank chambers with precious gems and valuable artifacts, but of course you can't just allow them to walk straight in, grab the loot and disappear without so much as a bruise. Instead it's down to you to create the most devious, lethal traps imaginable, hiding poisonous gas pods inside of chests, infesting the underground rivers with ravenous piranhas and substituting the stone floor slabs with pressure pads that engulf the hapless adventurer in flame when trodden on. You really are free to create whatever trap you want, providing you've got the cash.

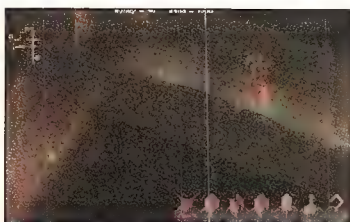
Rather than ensnaring treasure-hungry heroes in complex traps, alternatively there's the more direct approach to death — send in the trolls to rip 'em limb from limb. You can flood the dungeons with assorted creatures, from powerful spell-casting sorcerers to googly-eyed imps that run manically through the darkness. They won't do your dirty work for free, though, and often demand loads of cash before teaming up with you.



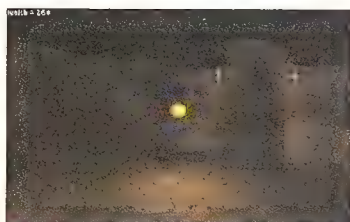
▲ At last, a role-playing game where you don't play a clean-shaven hero out to save pretty maidens from fire-breathing dragons. Nope, in *Dungeon Keeper* the aim is to cause as much death as possible.



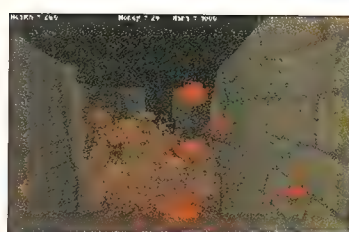
▲ After searching for the door bell for almost an hour, George the Well Hung gives in and begins the long trek home without even so much as a sniff of gold.



▲ Erk! A rabid swampling leaps from the murky water and tries to sink its teeth into the surprised adventurer.



▲ As a supreme being and hallowed ruler of the sacred dungeon, you can explore your creation first-hand.



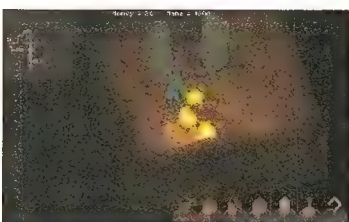
▲ Meet Andrei the Hard, a huge muscular bloke who tears the heads off goblins and uses their lifeless bodies as clubs. Except he's fallen into a trap and died.



▲ Without monsters your dungeon is pretty much redundant, so visit Ye Olde Jobbe Centre and hire the most gruesome creatures money can buy.



▲ Most of the game is spent looking down on the isometric 3D dungeon, placing traps and watching as warriors are ripped apart by razor-sharp scythes.



▲ The line of icons at the bottom of the screen allow you to construct your dungeon quickly and easily.

Six of the best

PC Review introduces the best games of the last three months.

Cyber Judas

Empire

£44.99

Rated 9

Issue 47

Try your hand at being President for a day.



FX Fighter

Philips Media

£39.99

Rated 9

Issue 46

The PC's very own Virtua Fighter beater.



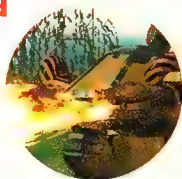
Command and Conquer

Virgin £44.99

Rated 8

Issue 46

Fast-paced strategy meets stunning graphics.



Star Trek: The Next Gen - A Final Unity

MicroProse

£44.99

Rated 9

Issue 45

Ultra-slick adventure based on the cult TV series.



AIV Networks\$

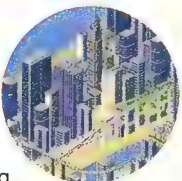
Infogrames

£44.99

Rated 9

Issue 45

Deep and involving train network simulation.



TFX: EF2000

DID/Ocean

£49.99

Rated 9

Issue 49

The latest inclusion to our hall of fame. TFX is a definitive flight simulator kind of thing. See the full review on pages 72-74.

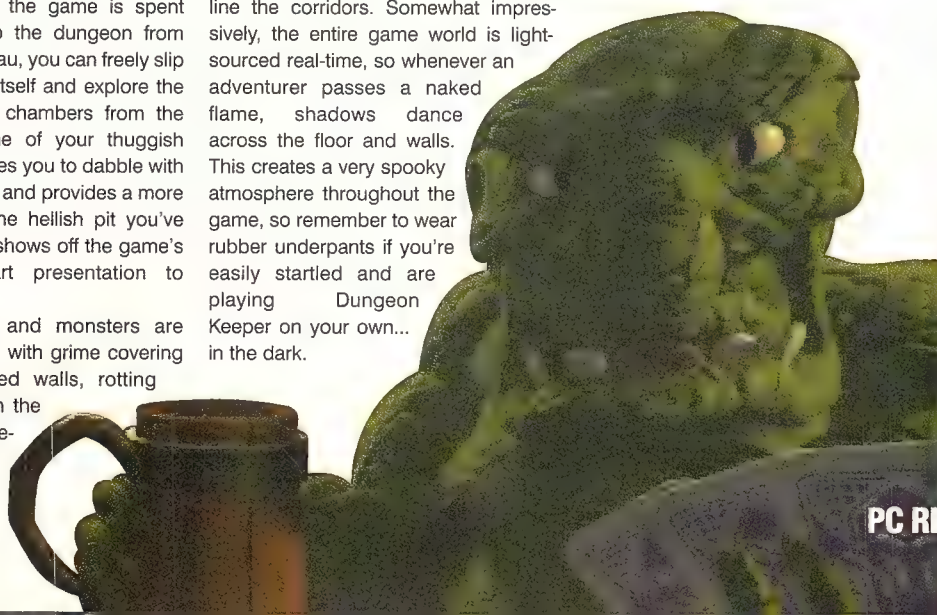


Divine Interaction

Although most of the game is spent looking down into the dungeon from your god-like plateau, you can freely slip into the dungeon itself and explore the grim tunnels and chambers from the perspective of one of your thuggish guards. This enables you to dabble with the traps first-hand and provides a more detailed view of the hellish pit you've created, and also shows off the game's exceedingly smart presentation to perfection.

The dungeons and monsters are extremely detailed, with grime covering the texture-mapped walls, rotting flesh hanging from the bones of the blade-wielding skeletons

and light flickering from the torches that line the corridors. Somewhat impressively, the entire game world is light-sourced real-time, so whenever an adventurer passes a naked flame, shadows dance across the floor and walls. This creates a very spooky atmosphere throughout the game, so remember to wear rubber underpants if you're easily startled and are playing *Dungeon Keeper* on your own... in the dark.



Shuffle off!

Mortal Coil: In Progress



CD ONLY

Publisher: Virgin

Contact: (0171) 368 2294

Price: £34.99

Expected release: November

The universe needs saving again? What is it this time? Jim Gillies investigates the global threat.

Way back when the weather was sunny and deadlines were loose I took a trip down to Newbury to see Crush! and its little baby product, Mortal Coil. Sweat-soaked and sunburned as I was, the presentation still made an impression on me. What with advanced artificial intelligence in both your opponents and other members of your team, a Doom inspired game engine, a complex mission structure and a strong female lead, it was shaping up to be a good game. I had to see more.

The Mortal Coil of the title is a covert, mercenary organisation charged with getting rid of people who cause trouble (nasty people only, of course) and for a change the team leader is a woman, Candy.

The game is broken down into six main missions and one bonus mission — which you can only undertake if you finish the others within a set time limit. Each one is set in a different environment (including jungle, desert, space station and London!) and includes the use of military vehicles. The main viewpoint is that of Candy, team leader, but you can jump into any of the other team members (that's two men, two women and BB — a military robot which provides backup and intelligence.

AI, AI, Oh.

Each character (including your alien opponents) has a high degree of AI. Team members can be assigned to reconnaissance or guard duty and will assess the threat they face — and run off if they're out-gunned. Alien commanders will leave their troops to attack you while they go off in search of reinforcements and each alien has a complex attack pattern.

In fine computer games tradition, the missions are linked together by cut scenes which present the background story, but Crush has also added a few extras. At set points an icon will appear, allowing you to see the rest of the scene from the point of view of another character. "It's not that important to the game as such", says Jonathan Dean, Crush Managing Director, "but we think it adds to the atmosphere

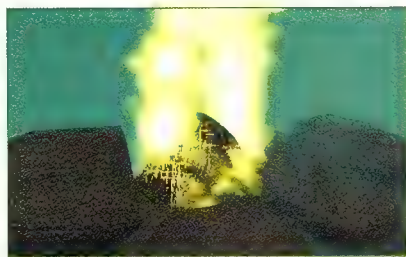


▲ **This is Candy — leader of the Mortal Coil team. She shares her voice with Dani Behr and Zsa Zsa Gabor's plastic surgeon.**

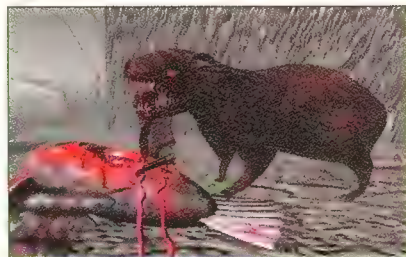
and gives you a reason to watch the scenes more than once." The two main voices for the game are provided by Dani Behr (The Word) and Ed Bishop (Straker, from Gerry Anderson's 1970s classic U.F.O.). "We picked Dani as the voice of Candy because we wanted a sexy, gravelly voice. When she was presenting the Big Breakfast someone said, 'why

not Dani Behr?', we asked her and she said yes. As for Ed Bishop; I had been a big fan since U.F.O. was originally transmitted and I really wanted him. When he came in to do the voice he was just fantastic!"

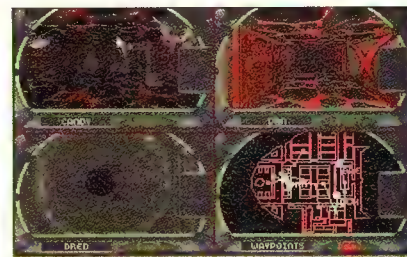
Jonathan describes the game as, "a little like a combination of Doom and Space Hulk". Look out for a review soon.



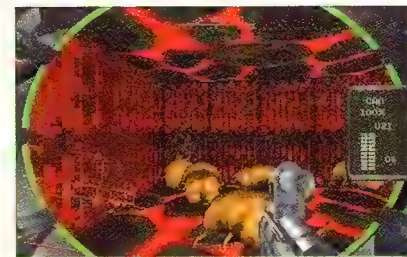
▲ **Mortal Coil has an ecological theme as this nuclear waste (yes, that's what it is) dump illustrates.**



▲ **My kitchen. Last night. And that's my girlfriend, that is.**

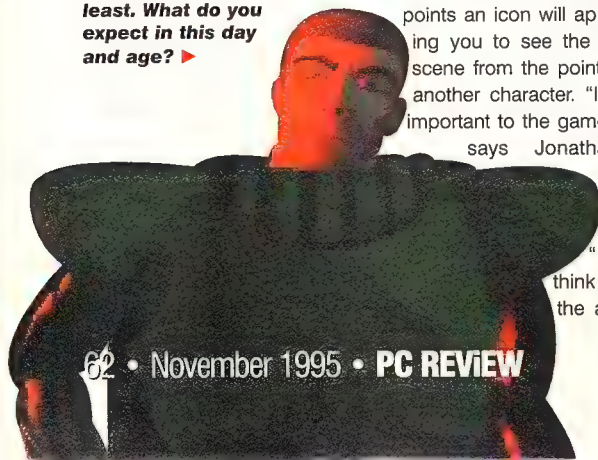


▲ **The game has a strong tactical feel. Characters can be set waypoints and you can monitor their progress.**



▲ **Strange pod-creatures in a technorance room.**

Hey, it's Straker out of U.F.O. Well, it's his voice at least. What do you expect in this day and age? ▶



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PC (SVGA 256 colour)



PC (SVGA 256 colour)



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SOFTWARE 2000



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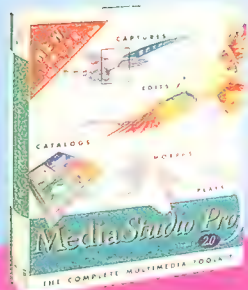
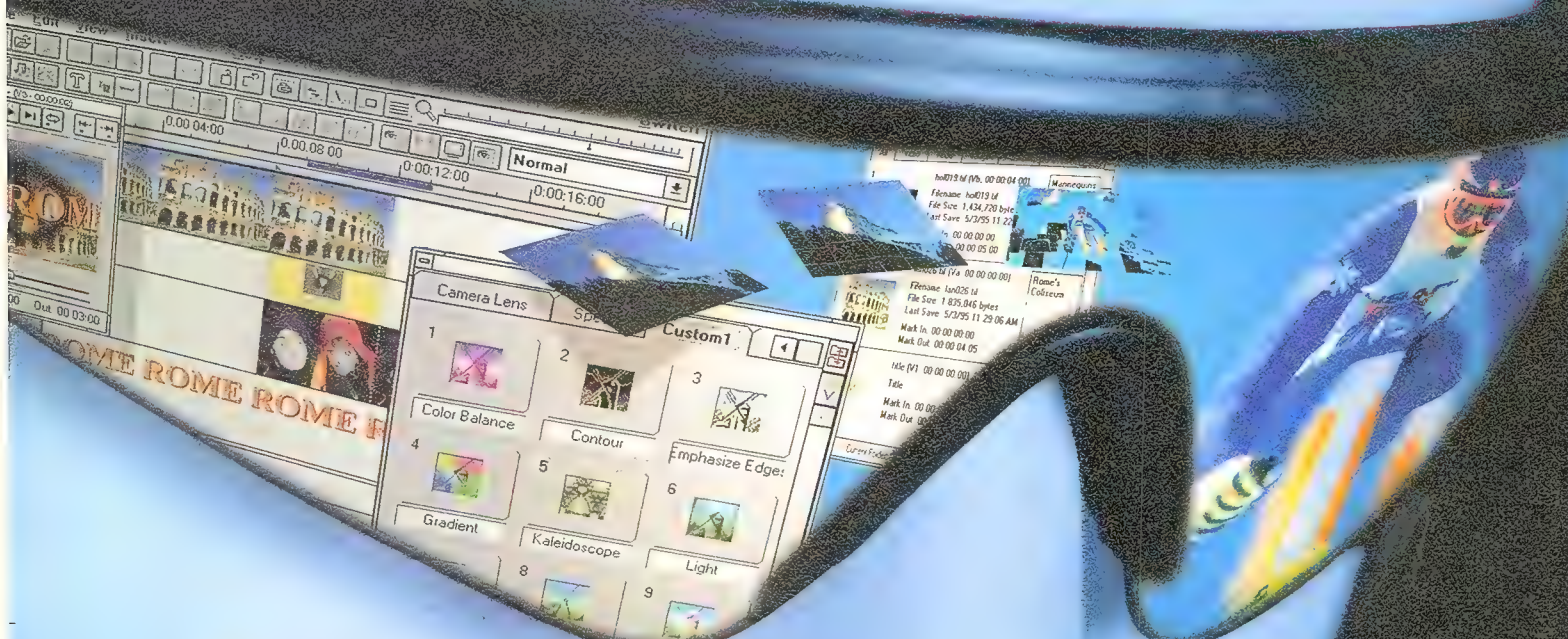
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▲ I bet she's popular.



▲ Aah, widdle baby Sheeva.

Immortal combat

CD ONLY

Publisher: GT Interactive

Contact: (0171) 258 3791

Price: TBA

Expected release: October

Mortal Kombat 3: In Progress

Mortal Kombat is coming back for another round of trans-dimensional fisticuffs. Pat Fox covers in fear — as usual.

After two games, a film, a cartoon series, more merchandising than you would think possible, and even a world tour (the nature of which I can't even begin to imagine), it might seem, to the cynical eye, that a third Mortal Kombat game is taking things a bit too far. However, the success of the arcade version would seem to suggest otherwise, so here comes GT Interactive with a PC conversion of Mortal Kombat 3, and it looks as if it's going to be everything the arcade version was, and more besides.

The new game will include all the new characters that were introduced in the arcade — that's eight brand new fighters, including the scantily-clad de-throned warrior queen Sindel, the twin cyber-ninjas Cyrax and Sektor, and the even more scantily-clad Sheeva, a sort of Gold-plated Grace Jones with too many arms.

There will be even more moves too; not only must you grasp all the new special moves for each player, but to add to the fun, you can choose between finishing your opponent off with an old-fashioned Fatality, an MK2-style Friendly or Babality (turn your opponent into a bawling nipper just for a laff), or with the new Animality (turn into an animal and rip their throat out).

Multi Kombat

However, by far the biggest news for PC owners will be the inclusion of network and modem options — the ability to take on opponents on other machines. There will be the option either to take on a one-on-one challenge or a tournament, where a number of players compete for ultimate victory. Which means you will be able to satiate your blood-lust over the 'phone...

There will be all sorts of secret levels hidden around the place, and all the secret codes featured in the arcade version — in fact the conversion will be faithful to the coin-op right down to the eight-level background scrolling and CD-quality sound.



▲ You see, it's like Dirty Dancing, only better. There's no Patrick Swayze for start. Now wouldn't that be great — ripping his spine out then beating to death with it.



▲ Look, it's going to be a bloody good game OK? They don't just stand there waving their arms looking dumb.

Monsters from the id!

With Wolfenstein 3D, Doom and Doom II under its belt, id software has a better pedigree than the whole cast of 101 Dalmations. Jim Gillies takes a look at its newest puppy.

Hexen: In Progress



CD ONLY

Publisher: GT Interactive

Contact: (0171) 258 3791

Price: TBA

Expected release: Late October

These days a game featuring a first person perspective on a 3D maze filled with monsters — human, alien or supernatural — heralds the cry of, "oh no, not another Doom 'em up".

No matter how good the game is, there's always a suspicion that it's taking the safe, well trodden path to sales. But for one software company that's less of a concern, id Software (as in "kid" not "eye dee") kicked the whole thing off in 1992 with Wolfenstein 3D — a 3D maze filled with Nazis, rabid dogs and an armour plated Adolf Hitler. That was rapidly followed by, well let's not be coy about this, one of the best PC games ever, Doom. Doom was Wolfenstein with bells and whistles, and really made an impact with its network option. Indeed it is still regarded as the definitive network game. Doom II however was not so well received and many people dismissed Heretic as a bit of a disappointment. Now though, Hexen seems set to breathe new life into the Doom engine.

Making the jump

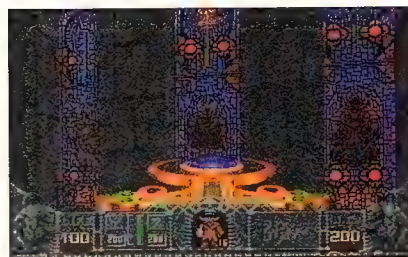
id Software describes the jump from Heretic to Hexen as much larger than that from Doom to Doom II. The majority of the development on the game was actually done by Wisconsin based Raven Software. "When we saw what Raven had done with Hexen we decided to



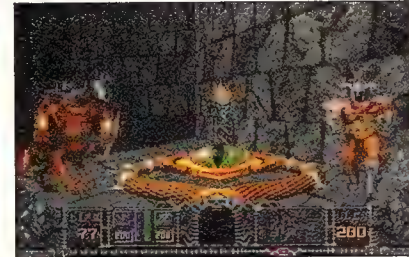
▲ *Something tells me I'm in trouble. Perhaps if I talk to him nicely we can settle this over an ice cold beer in the local tavern. Then again, maybe not.*



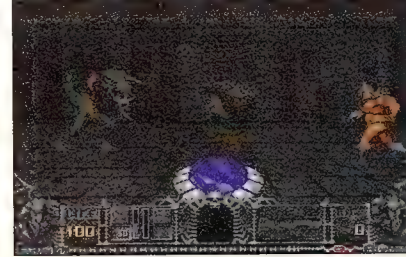
▲ *Most of the team who worked on Hexen have art backgrounds and it really shows. It'll almost be a shame to kill Mr Slimey here.*



▲ *Some people might describe violence in church as wrong. I prefer, "good".*

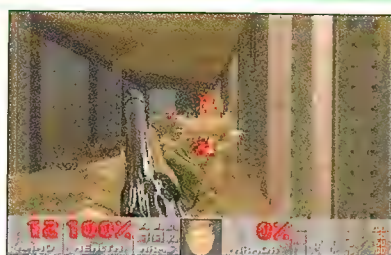
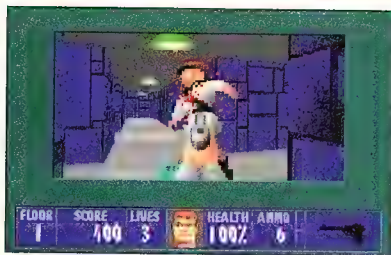


▲ *Ah, gentlemen! Would you care to join me for a spot of carnage?*



▲ *Look guys! A nice big gem which isn't a weapon at all. Come and it!*

The id pedigree

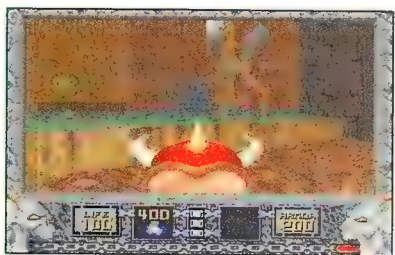


Wolfenstein 3D

When Wolfenstein came out it was a revelation. The gameplay grabbed a rather intimate part of your anatomy and pulled you in. You never knew what was around the next corner and things had a habit of going pear shaped before you knew it. Classic though it was it was soon to be eclipsed.

Doom

Wolfenstein was rightfully upstaged by Doom. In Wolf 3D bodies just toppled; Doom had them exploding. There was a whole new armory too, including chainsaws. But the piece de resistance was the network option — responsible for more lost working days than a flu epidemic. A classic.



Heretic

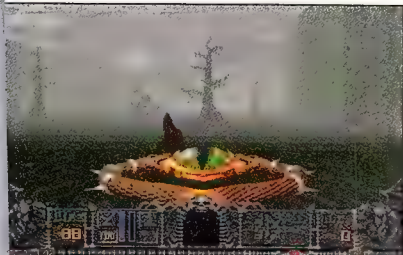
A medieval Doom? I did my fair share of scoffing too, but Heretic was different enough to appeal to the legions of Doom fans. The change of battle field, monsters and weapons was just enough.

Doom II

Despite having dedicated Doom'ers drooling at the very mention of its name, Doom II had a bit of a mixed reception. A lot of fans were disappointed at the relative lack of new weapons. Not as good as its predecessor.



▲ Cop a load of this matey! Hexen features 12 new weapons (four to each character class) and I think I'm going to enjoy this one. Not sure he will though.



▲ Hexen goes all out for atmosphere. What a pea souper!



▲ Yellow sky at night means it's time to run away.

change the name to exclude any reference to Heretic," says Mike Wilson of id Software. "It can hold it's own."

Players choose from three character classes mage, warrior or cleric. Although the character differences are largely limited to a balance of muscle and magic, they have a big impact on the way the game plays — beyond adapting your tactics to each character's strengths. According to Mike Wilson, "the environment responds differently to each character. It really will be a different game when you change characters".

All change

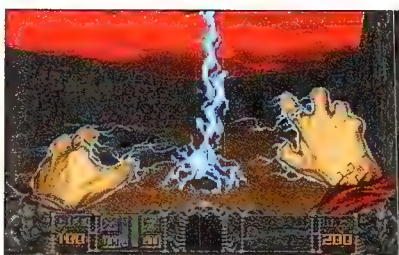
Another significant change is the gaming environment, with all the levels being linked. Although there will be new monsters and settings — including wastelands, sewers and temples — you can (and indeed will need to) revisit earlier sections. The new scripting language developed by Raven enables players to destroy objects such as windows, as well as allowing the inclusion of crumbling bridges, earthquakes, revolving bookcases and falling ceilings. Atmosphere is another biggie. While Doom is certainly atmospheric it's also a little monotonous, but a lot of effort has gone into making Hexen one of the most atmospheric games to date with random thunder and lightning as well as fog. Of Raven's 22 staff, 18 are artists and all of the programmers have artistic backgrounds.

New developments

Mike Wilson credits the Raven team with having, "maxxed out the Doom engine", but adds that, "the genre is fairly unlimited because it doesn't rely on story." The current project at id is the long awaited Quake, for which the developers have gone into seclusion — something which reflects the id philosophy. "I think Raven has created the end all to the Doom alikes," says Wilson. "When we did Doom we knew the technology could go further, but we have such a small team we wanted to take things onto the next level. That's what we like about being independent, we have the freedom to move on."

When Hexen ships it will have a four player network option, but id have plans for an eight player, server based option which will no doubt have employers all over the country jumping for joy as their networks grind to a halt and their employees do no work what-so-ever.

But that's someone else's problem. If the Doom alikes we've seen so far are anything to go by, then what is there to say other than "go to it"? Personally, I can't wait for the day when I can describe a game as being "Quake style".



▲ Bloody static electricity! It gets you every time.

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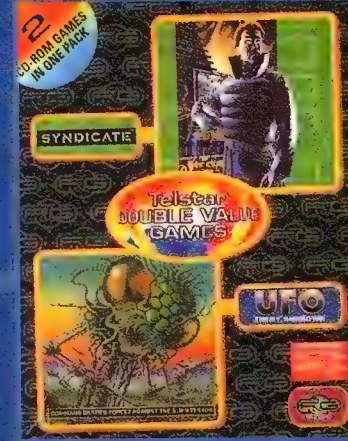
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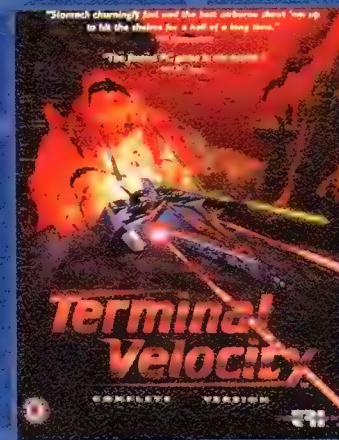
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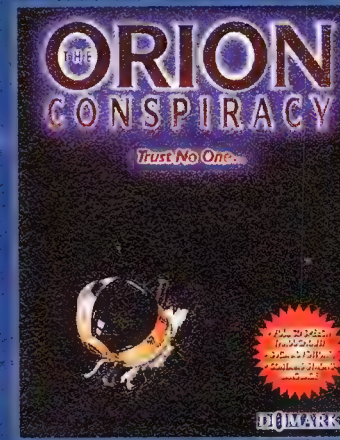
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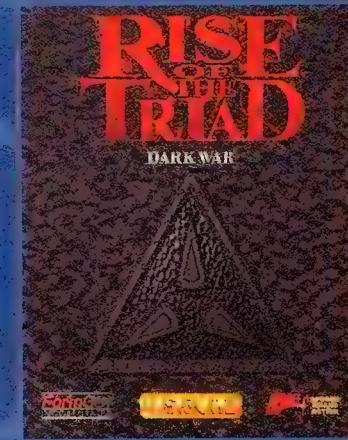
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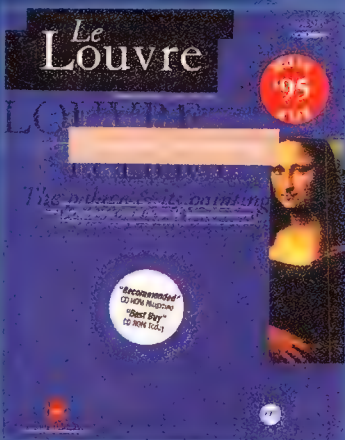
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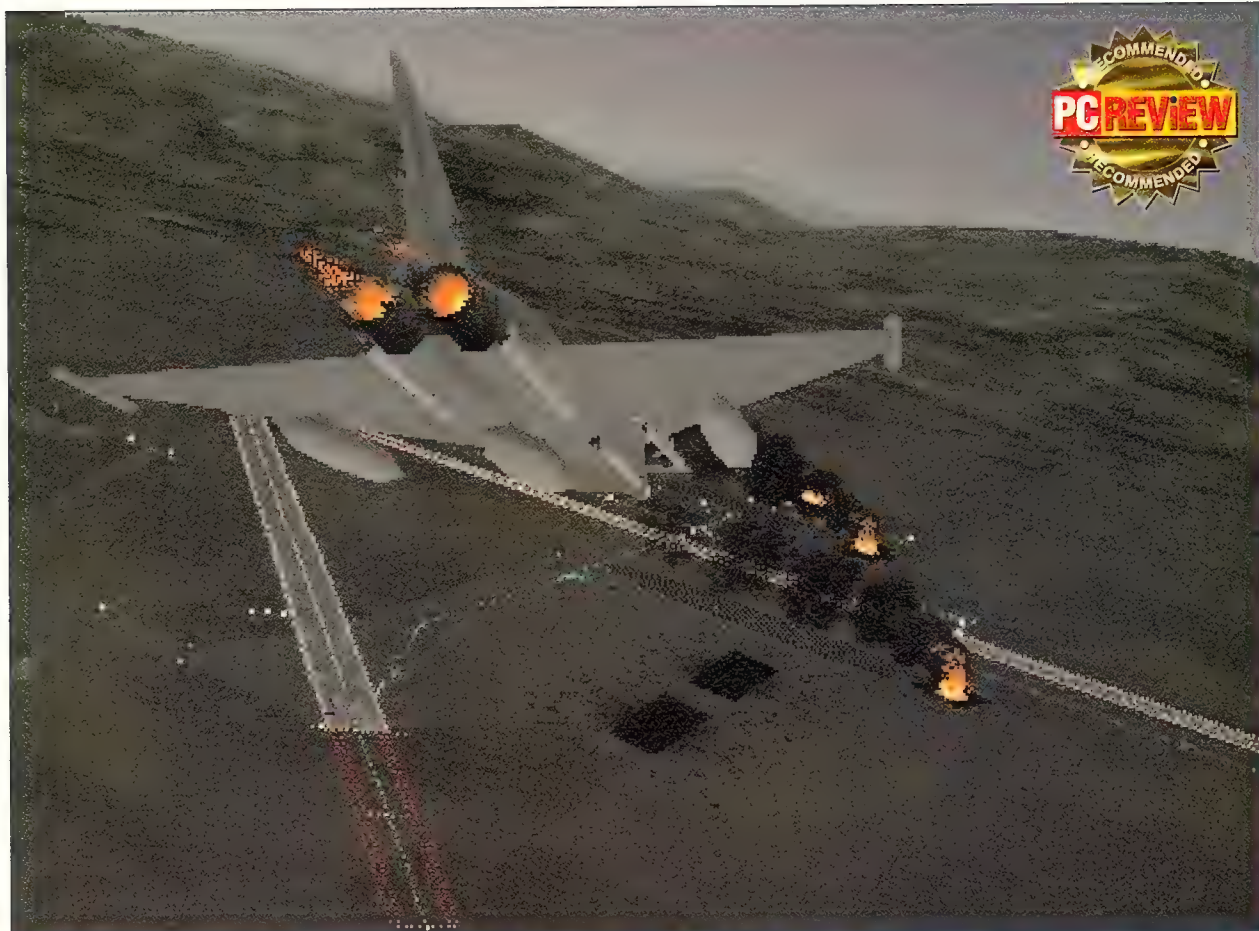
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TFX: EF2000

It's being billed as the most realistic aerial combat simulator ever. Apparently the RAF has also expressed a keen interest in the game. But is it really that good? Pat Fox is convinced.



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 66MHz 486, DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major soundcards

TFX: EF2000 is quite unique as it's one of the few games that verge on perfection. Trying to find negative criticisms in the game is almost impossible, while highlighting the countless positive aspects is child's play — there's more chance of Frank Bruno retaining the world heavyweight boxing title.

You see, TFX: EF2000 has been in development for years and in that time producer Digital Image Design has striven to ensure every aspect of the game is polished to perfection. Take the presentation for example.

Visually it surpasses every other PC flight simulation currently available, even Virgin's Flight Unlimited. The sprawling landscapes, which stretch cover four million square kilometres, is completely texture-mapped and accurately modelled on military charts and maps of Norway and Scandinavia. The terrain has an unparalleled level of detail, and is filled with mountains, deep fjords and cluttered cities. What makes this even more impressive is that the landscape doesn't warp or distort at all, a problem that dogged Flight Unlimited and even Origin's Strike series. In EF2000, whatever height you're flying at, be it cruising at 40,000 feet or skimming the ocean surface at Mach 1, the terrain looks crisp and, above all, very realistic.

The aircraft are equally well detailed, both inside the cockpit and from the numerous

external views. From the outside the various military insignia adorning the fuselage of your EuroFighter can clearly be seen, as well as the various missiles and fuel pods hanging from the wing mounts.

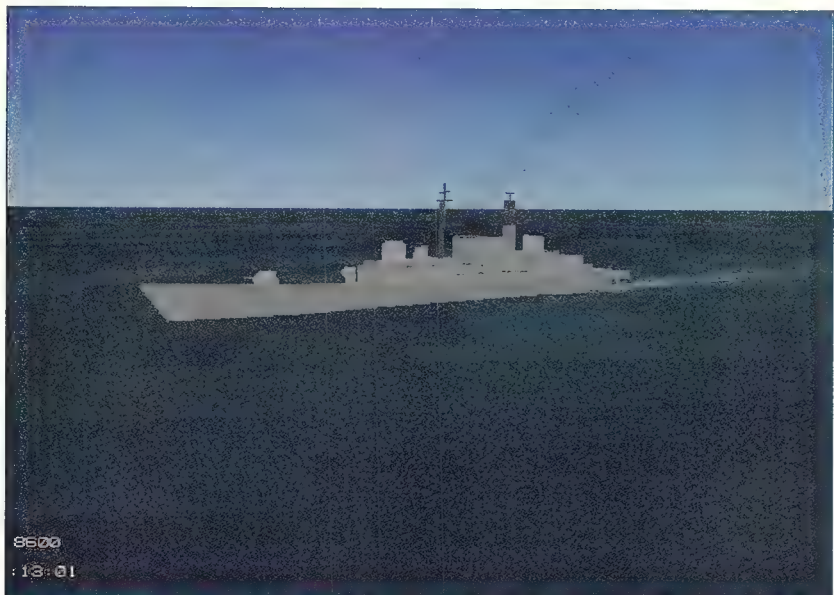
Under control

All control surfaces move including the ailerons, the rudder and the air brake, and there's even heat haze when the afterburners kick in! Internally the detail is quite incredible, especially in SVGA. All the dials and gauges work, even in the virtual cockpit, in which you can look out of the aircraft at any angle and track enemy fighters. This feature is especially entertaining after ejecting, as you're free to look in any direction whilst you drift slowly down to the ground.





▲ There are loads of external views to flick through, as well as glimpses of all the other aircraft in the immediate vicinity. Here a formation of F-18 Hornets patrol their borders of NATO air territory.



▲ TFX: EF2000's sophisticated WarGen campaign engine controls around 3000 units, spread across the massive Norwegian battle theatre. Astonishingly, each is artificially intelligent and therefore acts independently from one another.

Immaculate presentation is merely scratching the surface of TFX: EF2000 though, and it's the actual simulation and flight mechanics that have been vastly improved over the original TFX. Aeronautical engineers were consulted during development and as a result the EF2000's flight model is highly accurate (especially considering the EuroFighter is still a highly classified project). In fact every aircraft in the simulation, from MiGs to the Stealth Fighter, has been authentically modelled so each of them performs exactly as they would in real life. However, because the aircraft mechanics are extremely detailed and complex, don't for one minute think that EF2000 is therefore impossible to play.

The arcade mode allows instant dogfighting gratification, with a handful of simple seek-and-destroy missions against both air and ground-based targets. Entering the simulator section allows pilots to explore the entire bat-

tle arena in the free-flight option or practice flying and combat techniques in either basic or weapons training.

There are also various 'full' missions to embark on, in which all the tactics learned during training are put to the test, including engaging multiple targets and learning to use your wingmen proficiently.

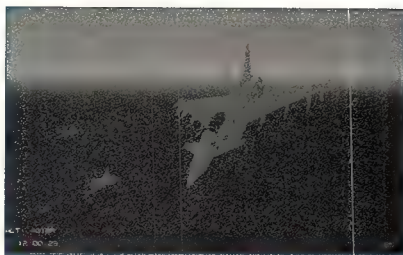
ALTERNATIVELY

Falcon 3.0 Spectrum Holobyte £14.99

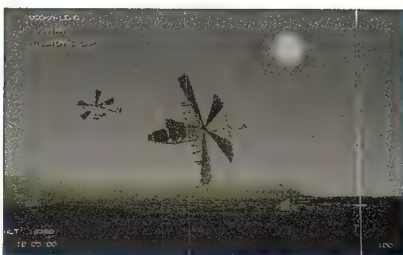
Regarded by many as the ultimate home computer flight sim, Spectrum Holobyte's Falcon 3.0 now looks incredibly dated with its blocky, simplistic VGA graphics. Instead watch out for the more advanced Falcon 4 which is due to appear early next year.



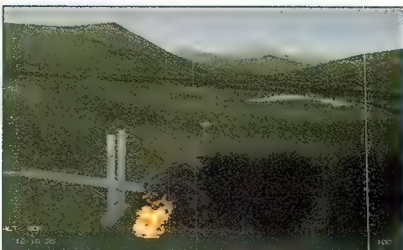
▲ The virtual cockpit makes it easier to track enemy aircraft, and lets you utilise the head-mounted targeting.



▲ Using the extensive command list you can issue orders to each of your wingmen. They will then carry them out.



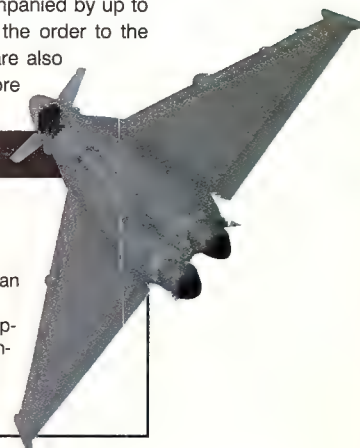
▲ During a routine combat air patrol a squadron of Russian 'Hind' helicopters are encountered over NATO airspace.



▲ Digital Image Design worked with aeronautical engineers to ensure the EuroFighter was accurate modelled.

Artificially intelligent

During each mission you're accompanied by at least one wingman, to whom you can issue orders. While the wingman (or wingmen — on some sorties you'll be accompanied by up to five other aircraft) will obey the order to the best of their ability, they're also artificially intelligent. Therefore



Flight Unlimited Virgin Interactive £49.99

Okay, so Flight Unlimited isn't an aerial combat simulator but it does use the same texture-mapping techniques to give tremendous detail to the landscape. But it's hardly action packed.

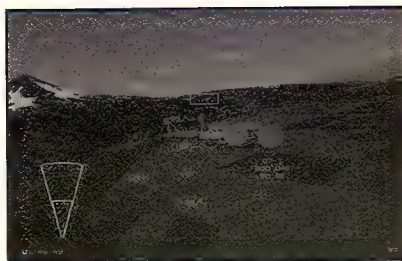
THE DAM BUSTERS



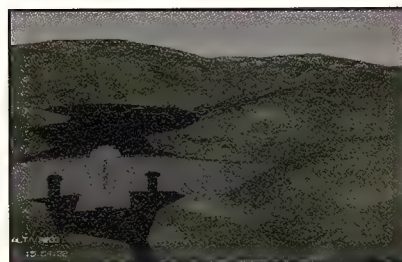
▲ Switching to radar on the Multi Function Display, the waypoints are shown along with the primary targets and any aircraft in the area.



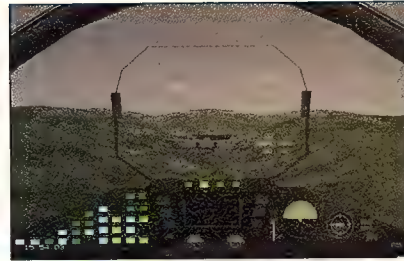
▲ The targeting system for the laser-guided bombs is activated by manually acquiring a lock using the video screen.



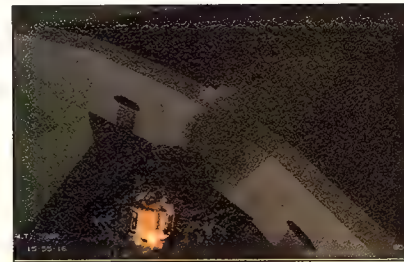
▲ Skimming low over the terrain to avoid radar contact, low-level flying is made much easier using the GRASS (Ground Avoidance Sub-System).



▲ It's away! The Thermal Imaging And Laser Designation (TIALD) system kicks in the moment the bomb is dropped, guiding the payload directly to the dam.



▲ In the distance the primary target can just be seen — a heavily defended dam surrounded with deadly SAM sites. Keep low and switch on the ECM.



▲ A direct hit! Wait for your wingmen to drop their load then return to base for a hero's welcome... well, a pat on the back anyway.

they'll act independently if needs be, and will adapt their tactics to match the situation of the dogfight in hand. However, the enemy pilots are all equally as intelligent and therefore also fly in groups and can be just as unpredictable and skilled as your own wingmen. Mind you, if they prove too tough you can reduce the difficulty level which reduces the effectiveness of their missiles and so on.

It's in the campaign section of the game that the pilot's artificial intelligence really comes into its own, though. The entire campaign theatre is controlled by the game's sophisticated WarGen engine, which handles over 3500 intelligent ground, sea and air-based units independently from one another. Essentially this means that you can sit back and watch as the conflict erupts before you, with countless ground strikes and air interceptions breaking out without you even leaving your airbase. Naturally you can get involved in the campaign at any time, simply by selecting virtually any one of the EuroFighter aircraft from any of the airfields, taking in the mission briefing then taxiing onto the runway.

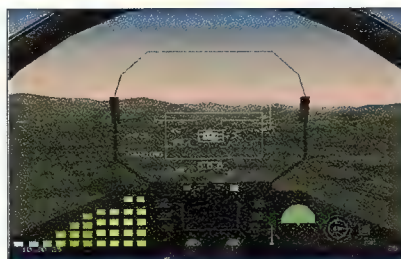
Top Gun

While flying your own mission in the campaign the game world is constantly evolving, and the outcome of the countless other conflicts are progressively determined. Obviously the result of each battle affects the overall standing of the campaign, so losing a battle on the border of NATO airspace will allow the ever-increasing Russian force to penetrate your territory and push you even further back into

Southern Norway until you eventually lose control of vital supply routes, places of strategic importance and, of course, vital airbases.

The campaign missions are often complex too, and are far more comprehensive than simple combat air patrols. For example, your brief might be to lead an attack and eliminate any aerial or ground threats in the immediate area, before a squadron of A-10s or Tornados fly in minutes later and take out the primary target. And at any time, you can switch to any of the aircraft in the area, both friendly or enemy, and then watch the battle from their perspective.

To say the campaign generation is comprehensive is an understatement. It is by far the most advanced, detailed campaign simulator I've ever encountered, and every single aspect of modern day aerial combat has been meticulously included to make sure it's as realistic as possible.



▲ Landing is made considerably easier thanks to the Instrument Landing System, or ILS for short. Simply fly through the squares leading up to the runway, adjusting your speed accordingly and then kicking in the wheel brakes when you finally touch down.

An already staggering simulation is made even better by its exhaustive network options too. Up to eight human pilots can fly any one mission, either teaming up together or flying

against each other. NATO pilots sit inside the cockpit of the EuroFighter while the Russians fly Sukhoi SU-35s, flying in any of the arcade, simulator or multiplayer-specific missions.

No matter how many pilots there are cruising the simulated skyways, TFX: EF2000 is undoubtedly the most comprehensive, thorough and realistic flight sim ever to grace the PC. It surpasses every other simulation in every single aspect, and as I mentioned at the beginning of the review it's damn near impossible to find fault with the game.

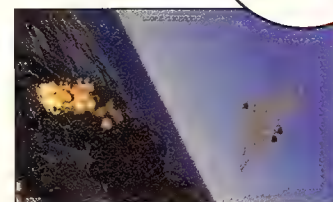
I suppose the recommended spec machine being a hefty 16Mb Pentium 90 could be regarded as a criticism, but personally I think that's a small price to pay for the most advanced flight simulator you're likely to see for a long time.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Flight simulator
 Publisher:DID/Ocean
 Price:£49.99
 Contact:(0161) 832 6633

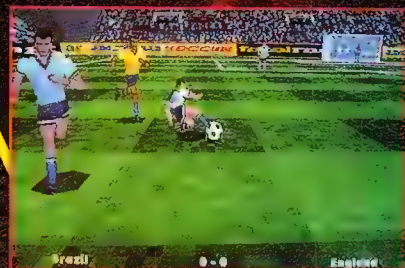
Quite simply the most sophisticated PC flight sim we have ever seen. Majestic.

9



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Fatal Racing

Quick, lock up your cars! Cal Jones is about to hit the road in Gremlin's hot new arcade racing game.

This how the game looks in standard VGA mode. You can play in SVGA if you wish, but unless you own a 133MHz Pentium, I wouldn't bother. Looks great, runs like a dog. ▶



At first sight, Fatal Racing looks like a standard arcade driving game. It follows the usual format: select your car (each of the eight models has its own strengths and weaknesses), decide whether to compete in a single race or a championship, and finally whether you want to play solo or against friends (the network option supports up to 16 players).

Then you get out there and race. At this point the game's high-speed charm becomes apparent. The texture-mapped graphics are fast (in VGA), and the futuristic courses, which include death-defying leaps, loops and corkscrews, are pure fantasy. All this, however, would be for nothing were it not for that all-crucial element: gameplay. And Fatal Racing does play extremely well. It offers a decent challenge without being overly frustrating, and even if you finish last in a race, you still come out of it having enjoyed yourself.

The courses are tough (we're talking three week-old mutton vindaloo here), but it's the intelligence of the other drivers which makes the game. Instead of sitting there passively while you overtake, they'll carve you up or shunt you into the nearest wall. It makes

◀ **There are three good reasons to head for the pits when your car's burning: it will run like a Marina, you can't see where you're going and you'll probably die.**

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 66MHz 486DX2
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster and comp.

winning very difficult — but hey, at least it's good practice for the M25.

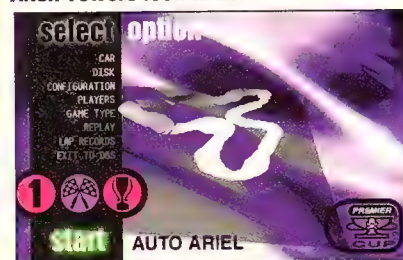
Death Race 2000

Aside from getting points for placings, you also get points for record-breaking laps and — yes — killing other players. When you hit a wall, you sustain damage. Take too many knocks and your engine starts smoking; take more and flames pour out of your bonnet (a sight I'm all too familiar with, having owned two Marinas and an Allegro). At this point it's a good idea to limp round to the pits, because if you get hit again you're toast. Dead. Expired.

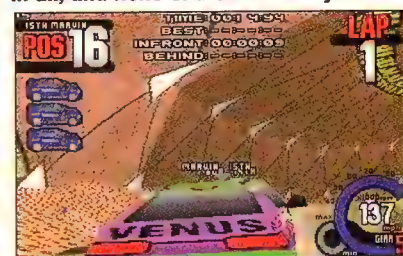
This might all sound rather frustrating, but don't be put off. We've all been playing it in the office, we're all rubbish at it but we all love it anyway. My only grumble is that the complexity of the courses, which twist and turn like a twisty-turny thing, sometimes makes it hard to see where you're going. But I guess that's part of the fun. It's good to see that Gremlin has a decent arcade racer on its hands after all those miserable Lotus games.



▶ **With jumps, bumps, banks and corkscrews, some of the tracks make Alton Towers look tame.**



▶ **This, believe it or not, is one of the more pedestrian courses. There are 16 in all, and none of them are easy.**



▶ **There's plenty of bumping and barging during races, even right at the back of the field. Which is where I usually find myself.**



▶ **No, we didn't print the picture upside down. Hit a jump wrong and this is what happens. Oh dear.**

PCR VERDICT

Type:Racing Sim
Publisher:Gremlin Interactive
Price:£44.95
Contact:(01142) 753423

Can I have another go please?

8



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Play Werewolf vs Comanche

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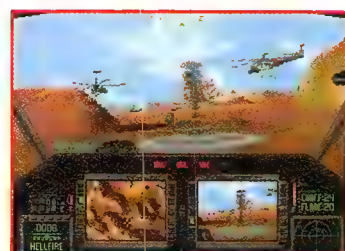
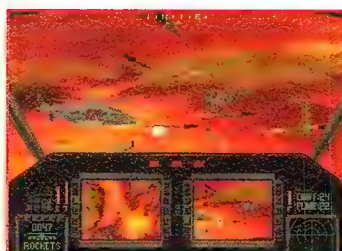
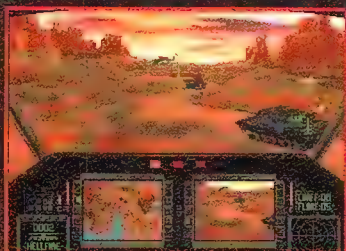
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*additional games required for more than two players.

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▲ **It isn't all blood and guts. The backgrounds, rendered by a team of Russian artists, are very attractive.**

I must confess that I had really been looking forward to Phantasmagoria. I have always had reservations about playing "interactive" movies owing to their traditional lack of gameplay, but this multi-million dollar creation was supposed to be something special. Not just an interactive movie, but an interactive *horror* movie complete with gore and everything. Wow. With a

plot dreamed up by Roberta Williams (creator of the Kings Quest series), gruesome special effects courtesy of Hollywood specialists, video, rendered backgrounds and a particularly comely heroine, it couldn't really fail. Or that was the theory. Unfortunately, the game itself is, well, not much of a game at all.

There's nothing wrong with the storyline. A young couple move into spooky mansion

This is supposed to be the most terrifying game ever created. But Cal Jones is underwhelmed by the whole experience.



once owned by Victorian illusionist Carno, who (we later discover) murdered each of his wives in a variety of inventive ways. The husband (Don) starts behaving oddly, while the wife (Adrienne) experiences terrible nightmares. She then discovers that Don is, in fact, possessed by Carno, and then ends up fighting for her life against him. Sounds familiar.

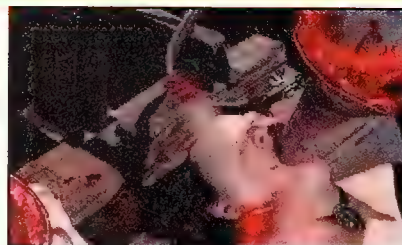
◀ **Adrienne suffers from violent nightmares. Perhaps she should stop eating such strong cheese.**

It nearly put me off my food...

Carno was not a nice man. Possessed by an evil spirit, he murdered each of his wives in a most gruesome manner before succumbing to an unpleasant death himself. But the demon who possessed him is still resident in the house, and has similarly evil plans for poor Adrienne. It's always the woman who gets it in this kind of movie as well. At least in a game you have a chance of coming out on top, but the main character can only die once in a film. Poor old Adrienne gets slaughtered in a dozen different ways in the game.



▲ **Not the goriest death in the game, but it'll still make you wince. Carno gags his wife and then breaks her neck in this head-twisting device. More than ouch.**



▲ **Stomach churning is the best way to describe this murder. This time, Carno force feeds his wife offal and blood through a funnel until she chokes.**

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 25MHz 486, MS DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Roland

The game is also extremely atmospheric. It's genuinely spooky, and even made me jump on one occasion when I was playing it on my own late at night. On those counts alone it delivers the goods.

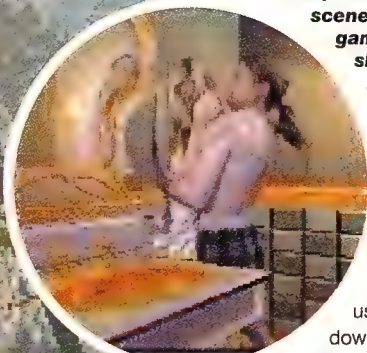
But where's the game?

Unfortunately, it's let down by a distinct lack of things to do. The game is split into seven episodes, each lasting a day, and each taking up one of the seven CDs which you'll find in the box. Yes, I did say seven. However, you shouldn't be fooled into thinking that the game must therefore be enormous — it's just that the video cutscenes which occur at key moments during the game take up a hell of a lot of disc space. The game itself is pitifully small, and I



The robot fortune teller in the hall seems to have a life of her own.

▼ Ah, the infamous "rape" scene. This caused the game to be pulled off the shelves in parts of America. It's a token addition designed to shock. And somehow both parties manage without removing anything they're wearing.



to the estate agents in town to pick up a key, using a hammer to break down a false wall (obviously made of balsa wood) or that old cliché, discovering a door where the key is in the lock on the other side. This last example is almost criminal. I must have encountered variants of it in at least 20 games. You stick your handy newspaper under the door and then use a nail to poke the key out. Never mind that you have to wait until day three to get the nail, when there must a perfectly good set of knives and skewers in the kitchen that would do the job straight away.

The other problems are solved by talking to people. Hardly difficult given that you don't even have to select responses from a list — it's all done automatically.

Seconds out

But the worst part of the game is the end sequence (all shot in fuzzy full screen video), in which Adrienne must perform a series of actions to avoid getting killed. Like, say, you have a couple of seconds to grab a book off your mad husband before he strangles you, then another few seconds to give him an item before he splits your head in half with a pendulum blade. And so on. But since you always get the option to try that sequence again if

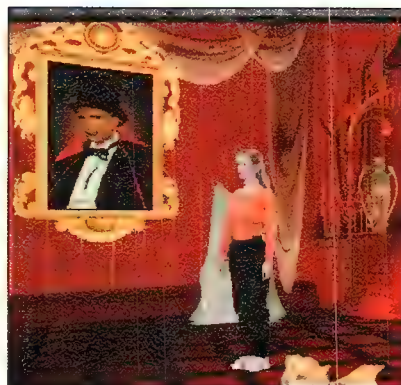
▲ Adrienne strokes her cat, named (in a fit of very un-American political incorrectness) Spazz.



▲ This is the most horrible killing. This time, Carno disposes of his wife by stabbing her through the mouth with a trowel. Nasty, nasty.



▲ And the most over the top. At the end of the game, Adrienne must escape the demon before it stabs its fingers through her eyes.



◀ The interiors are as visually splendid as the outside scenes, but the digitised characters are too obviously superimposed. They even have blue lines around them at times.

you die, it's all rather pointless, especially since there's an on-line help facility which tells you what to do if you can't be bothered to figure it out.

Phantasmagoria could have been brilliant, and I can't help but feel disappointed. Although I found it entertaining, it was over too quickly and the puzzles were extremely unsatisfying. The only reason you'd buy it would be for the gory bits (which are, admittedly, very well done but don't actually happen until day four), so that makes the option to turn off the gore seems pointless because that's where Phantasmagoria's appeal lies. Younger or squeamish players would be far better off with another, more taxing adventure, whilst anyone with an appetite for the gruesome would get more satisfaction from renting a horror video.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Horror adventure
Publisher:.....Sierra
Price:.....£49.99
Contact:(01734) 303322

Good story, great atmosphere, nice effects. But where's the game?

5



▲ For some strange reason, Adrienne and Don wear the same clothes for the whole game. And she doesn't even get dirty until day seven. Realism? Pah!

As a slight departure from the running and shooting, there are a couple of levels where you pilot a spacecraft through the interior of a Morph battle cruiser. ▶



Fade To Black

It's big, it's slimy and it's very, very nasty. It's Jim Gillies, who could show those Morphs a thing or two...

Back in 1993 French developer Delphine redefined the platform genre with Flashback, a stunning little number that combined ledge leaping aplenty with nifty gun-toting shenanigans. Now, after a lengthy stay in the depths of development hell, Delphine has resurfaced clutching Fade To Black.

As you may have read elsewhere, Fade To Black is the sequel to Flashback, although you wouldn't immediately recognise it as such — the two games are as similar as chalk and cheese. You can forget tiny bitmapped sprites wobbling around hand-drawn 2D landscapes — Fade To Black boasts a fully texture-mapped 3D world populated by Gouraud-shaded meanies. Sexy is the word.

Fade To Black's plot picks up straight from where Flashback's left off, with the hero Conrad Hart resuming his epic battle against the shape-shifting Morphs. In the grand tradition of aliens since the dawn of computer gaming, the Morphs are intent on taking over the galaxy — and it's Conrad's sworn duty to stop them.

The game consists of 13 self-contained missions linked by some superb animated cutscenes that help drive the plot along. Each mission has its own set of objectives that have to be completed, but basically they all boil down to a lot of running around mysterious alien bases, zapping bad guys and solving object-orientated puzzles.

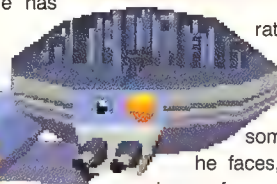
Although Fade To Black may look like just another Doom clone, don't be fooled — it ain't. The pace of the action is much slower, with the emphasis on nail-biting suspense

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 50MHz486DX,MSDOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

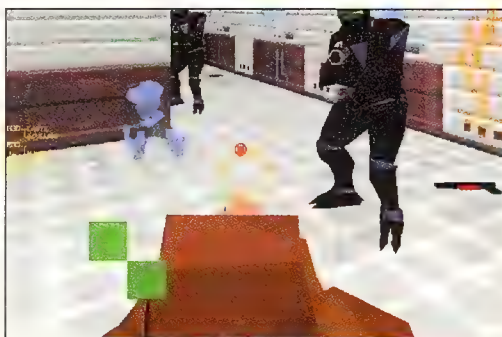
Sound: All major soundcards



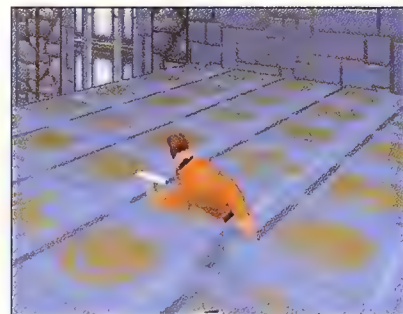
rather than rampant blood-letting. Conrad is a feeble protagonist, especially in relation to some of the powerful foes he faces, so it's vital to make good use of cover whenever possible to avoid early, er, 'retirement'. Certainly, anyone foolishly attempting to play Fade To Black in classic Doom style will find themselves dying with annoying regularity.

This tense, gritty atmosphere, combined with the exceptionally fluid and realistic character animation, helps to make Fade To Black an intensely exciting and exceptionally involving experience, and one that will keep you playing for hours on end until those mighty Morphs have finally been vanquished. Well, until the next sequel, anyway...

During the combat sequences you're treated to a view from above and behind Conrad's shoulder, making aiming at the approaching Morphs a lot easier. ▼

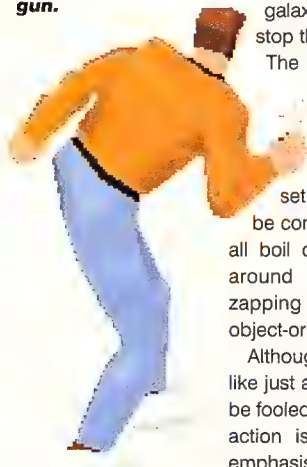


▲ During the game Conrad collects a lot of items, all of which are stored in this inventory. Use the right object in the right place at the right time for success.



▲ This is a typical Fade To Black puzzle: obviously you've got to tread on the symbols on the floor in the right order.

As well as the shape-shifting Morphs you have to battle all manner of sentry droids and security robots. Just as well he's got a big gun.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Action adventure

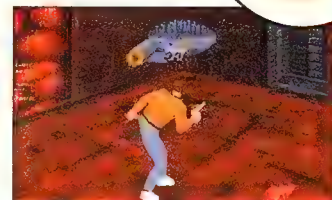
Publisher: ..EA/Delphine Software

Price:£44.99

Contact:(01753) 549442

Delphine proves the age-old adage: the morph, the merrier!

9



SLIGHTLY LESS SAFE THAN
JOINING THE MILE HIGH
CLUB BAREBACK WITH A
JUNKIE WHORE IN A PLANE
FLYING OVER A WAR ZONE
WITH THREE ENGINES ON
FIRE A PISSED UP PILOT
AND CARLOS THE
JACKAL SITTING
RIGHT BEHIND
YOU.

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

AVAILABLE FROM MID-OCTOBER ON PC CD-ROM

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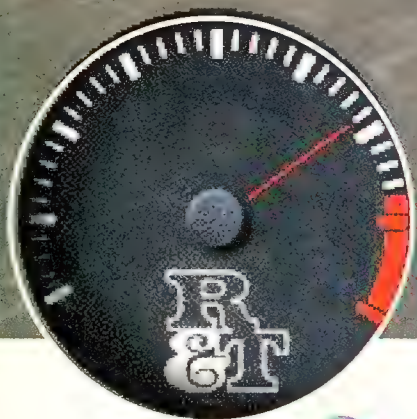
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Need For Speed



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486DX2/66 dual speed CD

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Most major soundcards

A couple of months ago I was fortunate enough to be offered a ride in a Ferrari. We roared off along the narrow suburban byways with the hi-fi blaring, screeching around roundabouts at 70 miles per hour and overtaking absolutely everything in sight. I sat back in my cream leather bucket seat, shades on, wind rushing through my hair, trying desperately to

They don't call him Pat "Speed Demon" Fox... at all. But we had to let him review Need for Speed to shut him up.

look cool and nonchalant and hide the fact that I was absolutely terrified.

Of course what I really wanted to do was get behind the controls myself, floor the accelerator pedal and... well, probably die horribly in a blazing fireball somewhere on the M4. And now, thanks to Electronic Arts that is, I can now fulfil my ambition...

Need for Speed plays unashamedly on the almost universal desire (particularly amongst young males) to drive big, powerful cars very fast. To that end, you are given the chance to get behind the wheel of not just one, but eight of the world's sexiest, speediest production cars — from the nippy Toyota Carrera right up to the sleek Ferrari 512TR and the downright monstrous Lamborghini Diablo.

I feel the need...

Right from the start, you are in for a sumptuous visual feast. The intro sequence features full motion video of all the game's motorised stars as they zoom and screech around deserted mountain roads and airport runways. The main options screen allows you to examine the technical specifications of each car, as well as giving you a potted history and even a bit more video footage to drool over. It's all very pretty



▲ There I am, having a nice relaxed drive in the country, and I get caught in an insane race-to-the-death. **Darn.**



▲ Oh dear, I'm seventh — in a field of eight. It's at times like these I wish I had a gun.



I knew I shouldn't have had that last pint.



▲ There are some genuinely pretty multimedia moments, showing each car in its rubber-burning element. Looks like this guy needs to call the Cones Hotline.

and adds to your impatience to get onto the starting blocks and burn serious rubber.

You can opt for one of three types of race: in single race mode, you can choose to take on one opponent or "the pack" — one of each type of car — over an eight-lap race; head-to-head pits you against a single human or computer-controlled opponent, while choosing tournament mode puts you on the grid for a series of heats over several stages with aim of becoming numero uno super car driver.

So we hit the grid, impatiently gunning the engine as we wait for the green light... and... we're off! The landscape slides smoothly by, made up of more texture-mapped polygons than you would have thought possible, and the car textures are actually digitised from photos — the realism is truly something to behold. No longer need PC owners hide their

heads in shame when confronted with Ridge Racer on some console or other — hey look, there's even more than one course! In fact, you can choose from any of six locations, which range from narrow, precipitous coastal roads, through claustrophobic urban streets to flat-out dirt tracks.

Caught by the Fuzz

More than once we have seen pretty games let down by shoddy gameplay, but fortunately, Need for Speed doesn't fall in to this category. While the controls are perhaps a little sensitive at first, it doesn't take too long to acclimatise yourself — but it's never easy.

On some of the tracks, you not only have to contend with your opponents — whose abilities range from laughably bad to frustratingly good — but on open road courses, you also



▲ The banked corners allow you to maintain a higher average speed — and then crash even more spectacularly.



▲ Of course, responsible drivers slow down in adverse weather conditions. Yeah, right.



▲ Oi! He didn't even indicate! Honestly, some people have no manners. It shouldn't be allowed on a public road.



▲ The crashes are spectacular, if sometimes a little unlikely — try doing that in your Mini Metro.



▲ There's a map of each course, but forget about that and just get driving.



▲ I attempt a bold manoeuvre by going wide. I lose several positions. Sod.

have to avoid the slow-moving civilian traffic, and try not to get caught speeding by the traffic police. If you're nicked twice, then you'll be disqualified, so if you're involved in a crash it's best not to hang around long enough to exchange insurance details.

So it looks great, and it plays great too — but what's the catch? Well, if there is a problem then it's simply that this is only ever going to be a driving game. There are no guns, no keys to find or problems to solve — just jump in your car and drive as fast as you can for as long as you can without crashing. The tournament mode adds a little to the longevity, and the two-player modem link is, as usual, a riot. But there's not a great deal of depth here — and don't forget, you'll need some heavy-duty hardware to do justice to the graphics. However, if all you're after is a mindless speed rush — and there's nothing wrong with that — then Need for Speed is where it's at.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Car racing game

Publisher:Electronic Arts

Price:£49.99

Contact:(01753) 549442

It's fast, it's fun, and it looks a dream — just like a Ferrari. I should imagine.

7



It's fast, it's funny shaped, it's a Dodge Viper.

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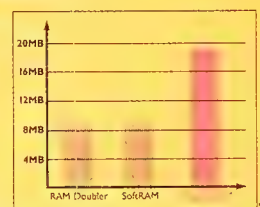
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(No cute little puppies were harmed in the making of this ad.)



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Battle Beast



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX, Win 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Win. comp. soundcards

David Upchurch
takes on mighty morphin' house-
hold pets in 7th Level's flashy
cartoon beat 'em up.

Unless you liked your beat 'em ups slow, jerky and totally unplayable, the poor old PC used to be something of a no-go area for die-hard fighting fans. But since the arrival of Acclaim's excellent *Mortal Kombat 2* conversion a few short months ago, the quality of PC beat 'em ups has increased dramatically, culminating in the recent release of GTE's stunning *FX Fighter*. But all good things must come to an end, so they say...

Which brings us (rather bitchily) to *Battle Beast*. This, the latest game from the wacky funsters at 7th Level, allows you to take control of one of the eponymous behemoths (there are six to choose between) and do battle with renegade beasts and mutant toads in an attempt to save the city, nay, the world from the evil Toadman.

Battle Beast's biggest selling point is undoubtedly the quality of its graphics. These were created by professional cartoon animators so they're exceptionally well drawn and entertaining to watch. The cutscenes and the death animations in particular are a real hoot.

But the problem is that games aren't just about watching, they're about playing — and this is, of course, where *Battle Beast* falls down. For starters, it lacks the speed and fluidity of its more famous rivals, and matters aren't helped by the fiddly controls. To launch



an attack you have to press the punch or kick button followed by a direction key, and in the heat of battle it's all too easy to end up jumping when you intended to land an upper-cut.

Another annoyance is that you only battle one type of enemy in any given game. Presumably this is because each Beast possesses thousands of frames of animation, so it'd slow down the game to keep loading in new monsters between each fight. But this would be a small price to pay for variety.

All in all *Battle Beast* isn't a bad game by any means. It's full of unusual and highly original ideas (which is a real rarity in the beat 'em up genre) but, graphics aside, it lacks the polish and finesse that fight aficionados have come to expect.



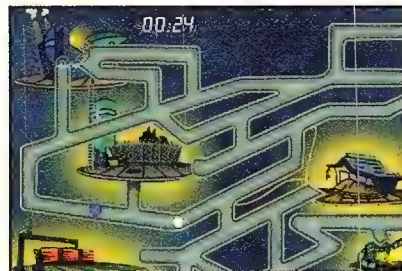
▲ OK, so *Battle Beast* may not play quite as well as the incredible *FX Fighter*, but it's got a unique style all of its own.



▲ Arrive at the combat scene before your rival and you have a few short seconds to search for hidden power-ups.

◀ *Battle Beast* can be played head-to-head with a friend using either the keyboard or a joystick. May the best beast win.

◀ You travel between the six fight locations by skimming through the slimy city sewers. Hey, it's the only way to travel, right?



PCR VERDICT

Type:Beat 'em up

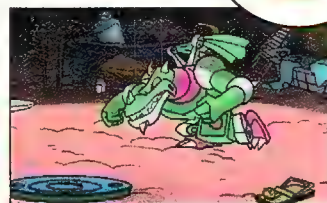
Publisher:7th Level

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01932) 355666

Somewhat akin to
Gary Stretch —
good-looking, but
lacking punch.

5



◀ In their 'passive' state the beasts resemble cute pet animals, but when trouble rears its ugly head they morph into raging war machines.

MORTAL COIL

MIN SPEC - 486 33MHZ 4MB RAM

PC CD ROM - £34.99

OCTOBER 1995

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by Dani Behr
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VIC TOKAI

more gameplay

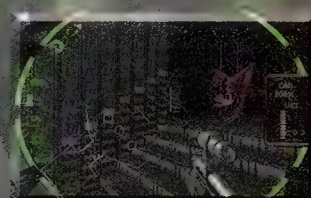
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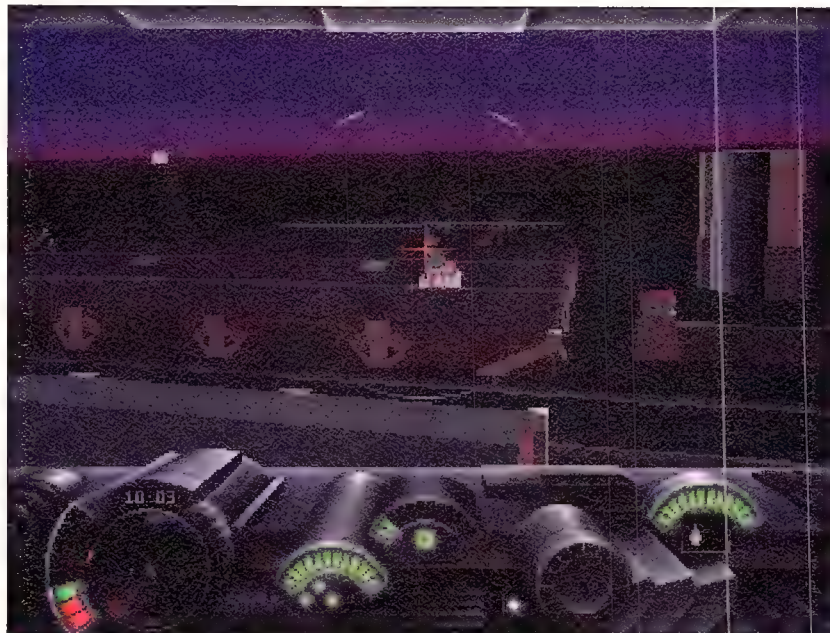
Darker


CD ONLY
Min. PC: 33MHz 486DX, MS-DOS 5.0
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster

Never one to refuse a challenge Jim Gillies undertakes to find something to do in Darker. Foolish boy.

When I received Darker I broke with tradition and read the documentation first. Big mistake. "Tolly tried to suppress the excitement he could feel..." — oh, good, yet another frustrated novelist. You take the role of said Tolly, charged with defending Delphi from the evil forces of Halon who, having polluted their side of the planet, are now intent on doing the same to yours. What originality. Still, "the proof in the pudding" and all that kind of stuff.

But the pain continues with the intro — a bit of dodgy video where you're briefed by a Gazza lookalike, in what I suspect is the programmer's office, before being taken to the Lego-like hangar. It's only when you actually take to the air that things begin to look up. Since the Delphi are essentially peace loving you start off flying a converted shuttle, but as other ships are developed you get access to them and the learning curve is reasonable. In fact it's all rather fun. The problems start.



▲ **Ha, ha! Down in flames he goes. Emm, straight into the factory I was supposed to be defending. Whoops!**

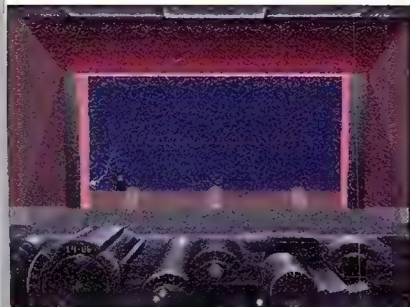
Sound the alarm!

The sound is dreadful, with the shots sounding like a cheap Dr Who special effect or someone attempting to break wind politely. But that is as nothing compared to what happens when you try to return to the hangar. According to the manual, the autopilot should guide you gently in without so much as scrap-

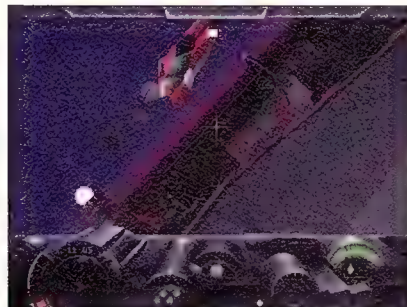
ing the paintwork. Oh, will it really? It's certainly not a problem on the first mission, but on the second it took me two days of dispatching the enemy violently and then heading back for hours of frustration — as the autopilot consistently failed to engage. To amuse myself, I tried

killing myself by crashing into as many different buildings as possible.

There are some nice touches. You can also pull some slick moves in the shuttle and the need to stick close to energy beacons provides a nice tactical touch, but at the end of the day there is one very big problem: flying around is kind of fun for a while but after that, there really isn't anything to do.



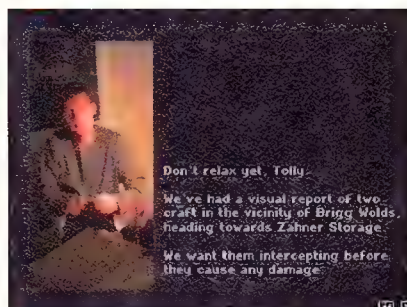
▲ **It does get better... but not that much.**



▲ **Bandits at 10 o'clock!**



▲ **Smoother than a block of lard.**



▲ **Look, I told you it was Gazza!**

PCR VERDICT

Type:Shoot 'em up

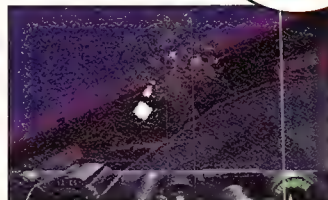
Publisher:Sony Interactive

Price:£39.99

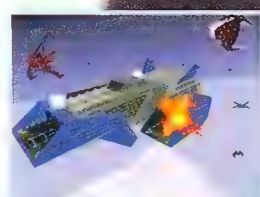
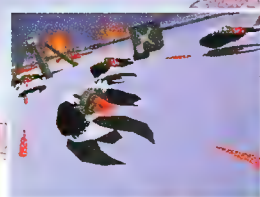
Contact:(0151) 282 3000

Could have been a reasonable game if only someone had remembered to include that old familiar — gameplay.

5



Ever since I started playing **Absolute Zero**,
I've been sleeping with a gun
under my pillow...



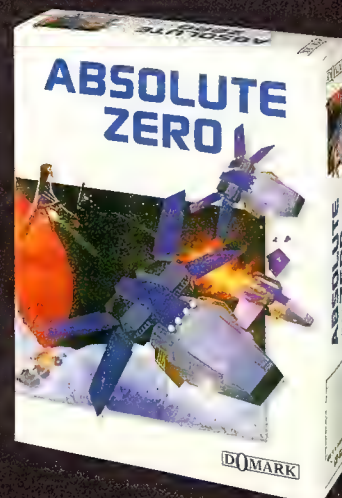
NOTHING could have prepared the peaceful mining colony for what was about to happen. From deep within Europa's icy core came an unknown and terrifying alien presence. The ensuing onslaught instantly transformed Europa – into a living hell!

Now you must use your mining machinery as weapons of war...

With 7 different space vehicles to fly and drive, 15 weapon systems, inter-racial rivalries and mass mayhem this is one action-packed space epic you won't ever forget!!

ABSOLUTE ZERO also features:

- Dozens of missions in a complex, interwoven plot
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- FMV sequences and interactive CD soundtrack with complex, layered sounds and professional voice-overs
- Stunning Gouraud shading
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DOMARK

PC CD ROM

One of the oldest video games in the world gets a new lease of life. Pat Fox witnesses the resurrection.

Pitfall

The Mayan Adventure



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 33MHz 486DX, Windows 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible card

Pitfall has been around for donkey's years – from its origins in the early eighties on the Atari 2600, through various incarnations on a series of formats – and now its latest offspring, the Mayan Adventure, has been released for the PC.

For those too young to remember, Pitfall is a platform game. You take the part of Harry Jr, who must rescue his father Harry Sr (protagonist of the original Pitfall games) who has been taken prisoner by the spirit of an evil Mayan warrior. But you can forget the plot – all you really need to know is that there are 14 levels of running, jumping and killing meanies between you and your destination.

The wonders of modern technology

Pitfall: the Mayan Adventure really has very little in common with its aged console ancestor; the original game had primitive blocky graphics, and the gameplay consisted of running along in a more or less straight line, jumping over logs, avoiding scorpions and bouncing off crocodiles. But this is the nineties, so Pitfall PC features some great-

looking hand-drawn animation, realistic sound effects and a choice of musical styles to tinkle away in the background.

In addition, the levels are "non-linear", ie, they take some exploration to complete – there are dead-ends, hidden bonuses and extra levels to be found. If you look hard enough, you'll even find the whole of the original Atari console version hidden in there somewhere (hint: look for the scorpions).

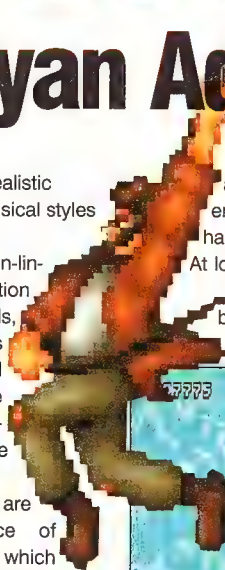
To help you on your way, you are armed with a choice of

weapons: a slingshot which you've got to collect bags of stones for, an Indiana Jones-type bullwhip which takes a bit of getting used to (although it's essential you master how to use it properly), boomerangs and exploding rocks, which are hard to find, but very powerful and worth keeping an eye out for. Most of the meanies can be dispatched with a single hit, meaning that you can get on with exploring without endless tedious slug-fests holding you up every few seconds.

Pitfall: the Mayan Adventure is nothing new, but it is a good platform game (but then you'd expect them to get it right after all these years),

and the levels are big and complex enough to keep all but the hardest of hard-core gamers busy for some time.

At long last, a sequel that's better than the original and if you do get bored, there's always the original game to find.



◀ I'm not sure what this is, but it's good for swinging on. In fact, I don't think I want to know.



◀ The original Pitfall in all its glory. So much for retro-gaming.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Platform game

Publisher:Activision

Price:£44.99

Contact:(0181) 742 9400

Looks good, sounds good, plays good. Lacks originality, but so what?

8



PC
CD-ROM

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Graphically enhanced throughout and with animated sequences, **Player Manager 2 Extra** boasts a multitude of thrilling new features, exciting options and great sound effects.

Player Manager 2 Extra remains the only game that allows you to play for the team you manage giving action on and off the pitch.



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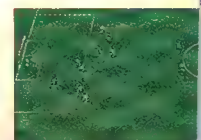
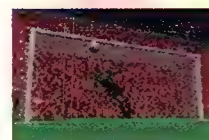
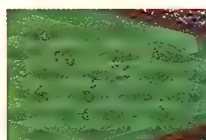
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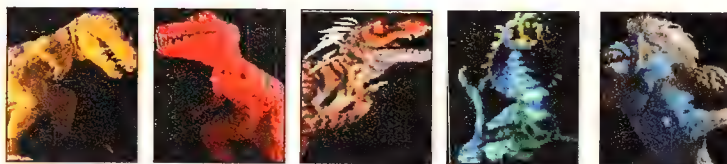
Registered users buy this great new version for only £10.00 (Includes P&P). Contact Anco for details.

ANCO

Published by Anco Software Ltd, Unit 7 Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BH Tel: 01322 292513 Fax: 01322 293422. Screenshots are illustrative of gameplay only and may vary from format to format. Requires a joystick.

Big, slimy and always in a bad mood — Pat Fox stamps his feet and bares his teeth.

Primal Rage



◀ Sauron takes time out for light snack — naked virgin on toast.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz, 486DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

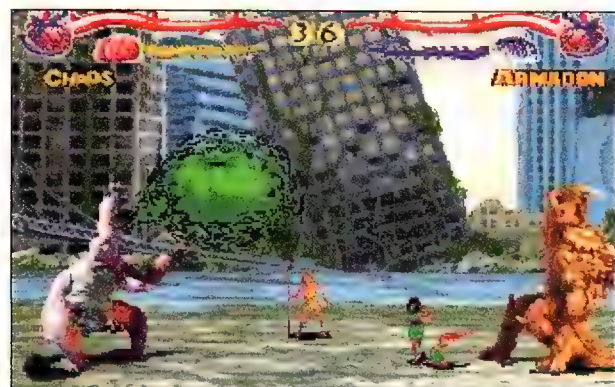
Sound: Most major sound cards

Just how many variations can there be on the theme of two people beating the living daylights out of each other? After the bare-knuckle combat of Street Fighter, the pseudo-mystical blood 'n' guts of Mortal Kombat and the interplanetary antics of FX Fighter, here comes yet another one-on-one slug-fest — and this time it's mutant dinosaur-gods battling for domination of post-apocalypse Earth. Well, of course.

Primal Rage began life as a coin-op, and this conversion remains faithful to it while also adding a few new features, notably the three new modes of play. As well as the usual head-to-head mode, there's a tug of war option, where opposing players' health bars are linked; endurance, where each player chooses four characters to fight with, and also a training mode where you can choose your opponent.

The sprites, based on animated claymation figures, are huge and detailed. The figures

You may stamp and scream, but rub Chaos up the wrong way and he lets rip with a noxious burp. Tee hee. ▼



stomp and jump around with surprising speed and agility given that they're supposed to be recently-defrosted dinosaurs. All the special moves are there from the arcade, including Diablo's fire-breath to Chaos' scatological Fart of Fury, and they are all reasonably accessible as long as you have a four-button joystick — anything else, particularly the keyboard, is virtually useless.

They came and ate us

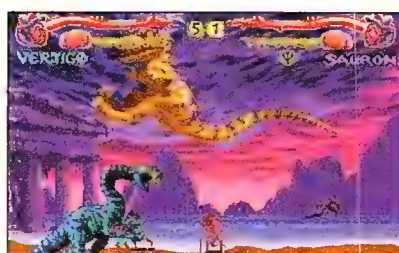
Spice is added to the proceedings by the fact that your character is actually a god, and relies on the faith of its human followers for strength.

The better you play, the more followers you get — which makes you stronger. Hit your opponent enough times in a row and they are stunned, at which point you can actually eat their followers — a nice touch.

In some cases it is worryingly easy to advance quite some way into the game using the same move repeatedly — but this only works up to a point. In general, the difficulty

level is well structured, meaning that it takes practice to make it beyond the opening bouts.

However, minor criticisms aside, Primal Rage is a faithful conversion of a good arcade game, and even manages to offer the odd original touch to an otherwise tired genre. A rare treat for all you joystick junkies out there.



◀ Vertigo finds out what it's like to wear a dinosaur for a hat. It hurts, and it's very messy.



◀ Talon does his best John Travolta, although Vertigo makes a useless Uma Thurman.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Beat 'em up

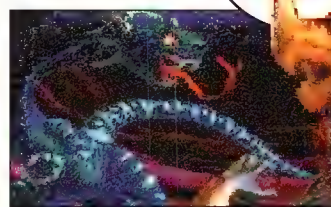
Publisher: Time Warner Interactive

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01604) 602832

It's got blood, it's got guts, it's also got rude gags. What more could you ask for?

7





Thunderscape

CD ONLY
Min. PC: 50MHz 486DX, MS-DOS 5.0
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards

Solid and predictable, David Upchurch was the ideal choice to review SSI's all-new fantasy spectacular.

SSI built its reputation for solid (if generally uninspiring) role-playing games with a long series of 'official' Advanced Dungeons & Dragons releases. However, with the release of Thunderscape, an 'original' RPG created in-house, the company obviously wants to prove that anything Gary Gygax can do, it can do too — only better of course.

It's set in the world of Aden, a fantastic realm where ancient sorcery and Jules Verne-ish steam technology meet to form 'mechamagic'. On top of this novel plot twist, there's also an all-new RPG system with its own unique combat and magic rules and a wide range of weird and exotic monsters and character classes.

To be honest, despite SSI's claims to the contrary, it's all very familiar stuff: generate a party of adventurers... traipse around endless, samey-looking passages... kill scores of nasties... find keys to open locked doors... solve the odd puzzle or two... seek out the master baddy... you know the (yawn) score.

Flavoursome

Thunderscape does have two things in its favour, however. The 3D graphics engine, which permits such niceties as sloping floors, tunnels and bridges, is quite impressive (although it moves like a paralysed slug on anything less than a 66MHz 486). And the combat system is very flexible, allowing you to order your merry band to perform all manner of special attacks and defenses. Unfortunately, this is all offset by a legion of minor annoyances, such as the ultra-confusing 3D automapper, limited monster animation and minimal character interaction.

Perhaps Thunderscape's worst crime, though, is that it does precious little to set up its fantasy world. All we're told is that the forces of good (nebulously defined) are at war with the evil nocturnals — foul creatures of nightmare which appeared after a solar eclipse a decade earlier. There's some further notes on each of character races and monster types — and that's it.

No doubt SSI is saving further shock revelations about the world of Aden for future games in the series, but this severe lack of background detail makes Thunderscape a curiously uninvolved and unatmospheric experience. That, combined with the lack of originality and the niggling downers mentioned earlier in this very review, consigns Thunderscape to the bin labelled "OK, but..."



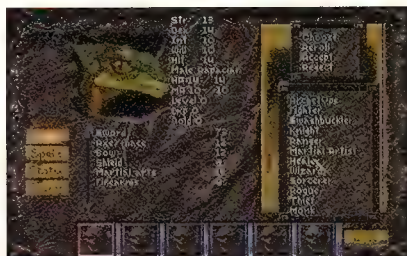
▲ Ah, ye olde RPG shoppe, repository of all manner of weapons, potions and provisions. The perfect place for a trolley dash — if you've got the cash.



▲ Riddle me this, riddle me that...



▲ No you can't talk to Thunderscape.



▲ Create your own adventurers here.



▲ Thunderscape's combat system is excellent, albeit a little slow-moving.

PCR VERDICT

Type:RPG

Publisher:Mindscape/SSI

Price:£44.99

Contact:.....(01444) 246 333

It may be a whole new world, but sadly it ultimately boils down to the same old story.

6

Pinball Illusions

CD AND DISK

Min. PC: 25MHz 486DX, MS-DOS 3.3

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Gravis

As a lover of all things round and bouncy, Cal Jones flippered her lid when it came to the multiball action.

What a load of balls! No, I wasn't being rude about the game — it's just that Pinball Illusion boasts a multiball feature and when you manage to trigger it off, a fair few of those shiny, spherical objects end up bouncing off your flippers. Six, to be precise, if you can keep them in play.

Once again, 21st Century has delivered a fine example of what it does best — pinball games. Pinball Illusions is the company's umpteenth venture into the world of machines that go "ping!" (not to mention "whirr!" "click!" and "tilt!") so you'd expect it to be a rather superior example of the genre. Which it is, of course. Despite this, Illusions is not all that different from its predecessors, Dreams, Dreams 2 and Fantasies: it has four slick, theme tables packed with ramps, targets and flashing lights, a groovy soundtrack, a choice of VGA or SVGA graphics and just about the most realistic ball action in the business.

Quelle difference?

The only real difference, then, is the aforementioned multiball. It's good, but then you wouldn't expect it to be otherwise. But that aside, it's as polished a pinball game as I've ever seen, and I do have a soft spot for a bit of the old two flipper action.

Still, I can't help feeling a little sorry for 21st Century. The company may make great pinball games, but I've yet to see it attempt anything else. Imagine this scenario: nice 21st Century public relations bloke turns up at office to meet cynical old games journalist.

PR bloke: Hi! I've brought you our latest game!

Journo: Pinball, is it?

PR bloke: Er, yes. How did you guess?

Journo: Just a hunch.

And so on. But perhaps I'm being a little unfair, here — 21st Century has threatened to release an adventure later this year. I wonder if it has any balls?



▲ **Extreme Sports** takes you into the realms of bungee jumping off Clifton Suspension Bridge and other potentially fatal hobbies. This is my fave — every time 21st Century sends me a pinball game I "bond" with one of the tables.



▲ **Babewatch.** Not a bad table so long as you have no objections to bare buttocks. The music's a bit ghastly, too.



▲ **Law 'n' Justice.** Not bad a bad table, but certainly not the best. The music's unmemorable, but it isn't quite an audio disaster zone.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Pinball simulation

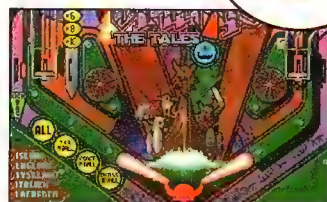
Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment

Price:£37.99

Contact:(01235) 851473

A polished, addictive pinball sim from 21st Century. Imagine my surprise.

7



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AI Unser Jr. Arcade Racing

Pat Fox, your starter for ten is "Who the hell is AI Unser Jr. anyway?"

AI Unser's Arcade Racing is apparently intended as a Virtua Racing-style driving game — ie, the emphasis is on speed and thrills rather than accurate simulation. Unfortunately, although the speed is there, the thrills are lacking.

There are no crashes, no bashing the heck out of your opponents and no pit options. All the cars have identical handling properties so just choose the one you like best.

The graphics are reasonably smooth on a fast machine, but it makes no odds as the courses are almost identical.

Similarly, the sound is utterly dull — all right, it's difficult to make engine noise interesting, but a bit of crowd noise, or even a clank when you hit another car would have brightened things up a bit.

However, the most heinous omission is the lack of multiplayer options — no network, no modem, no fun.

As a result, AI Unser Jr. Arcade Racing has to be relegated from "merely average" to "virtually useless".

Apparently, AI Unser Jr. is a "legendary Indianapolis 500 winner". So now you know.

Minimum PC: 486DX2/66, Win 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows comp card



▲ Your opponents' tactics tend to consist of weaving from side to side a lot.

PCR VERDICT

Type: Racing game

Publisher: Mindscape

Price: £29.99

Contact: (01444) 239600

Let's not beat about the bush; this game is not good.

3



Mordor: The Depths of Dejenol

It may be the first Windows-based RPG, but don't go expecting anything new. Gordon Houghton plumbs the depths of boredom.

Mordor claims to be the first Windows fantasy RPG, with all the advantages of convenience, scale-ability and half a dozen different displays on screen at once. I can't think of any rivals, although MicroProse's The Legacy and Accolade's Eric The Unready both created Windows-style

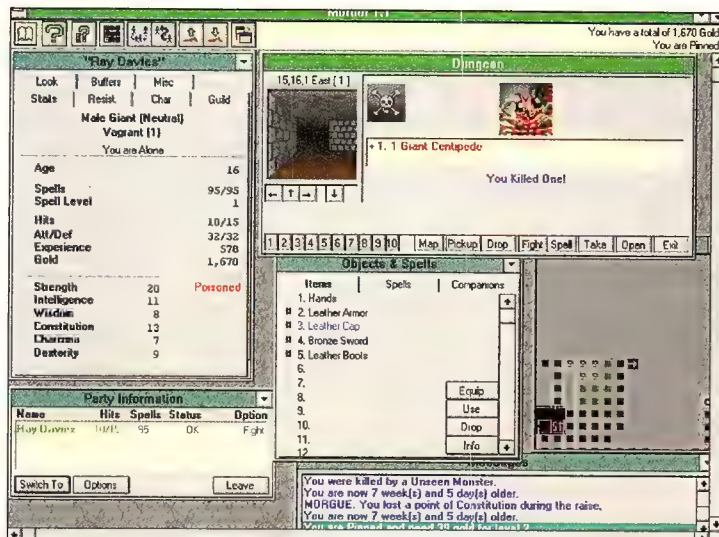
Minimum PC: 33MHz, Wind 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Wave/MIDI sound cards

An RPG that crams the viewing window, map, character stats and text all on one screen.▼



◀ Yet more information for you to digest. Great, but where's the action-packed gameplay?

PCR VERDICT

Type: RPG

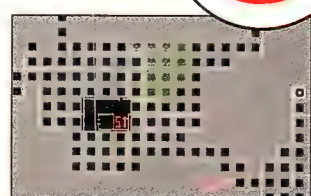
Publisher: CDL

Price: £39.99

Contact: (01483) 756831

Nice idea, that unfortunately results in a remarkably tedious game.

3



interfaces while running from DOS.

Unfortunately, this flexible environment is Mordor's only redeeming feature. Behind it lurks a very basic dungeon-based RPG with all the usual features, including character generation, pointless exploration, magic, combat and personal advancement. It's all extremely dull, with tiny block-scrolling 3D graphics, only four direction controls and no monster animations. Not only that, but the fight sequences are extremely tedious, as the game relies far too much on statistics.

Fans of old-style role-playing might find something to like in this, but everyone else should steer clear.

The Jungle Book

Rik Henderson has all the bare-necessities to delve into the latest Disney-related platformer...

Around two years ago you could count the number of PC platform games on one pig's trotter, but not any more. Today we are positively spoilt for choice, and to be honest a vast majority of such platformers are decidedly ropey. Thankfully the new breed of PC platformers are conversions of very good console games, and The Jungle Book is certainly one of them.

What this essentially means is that to survive in as tough a market as the console sector, The Jungle Book had to rely on its cute animations and good old fashioned fun gameplay (as well as the Disney licence of course), and everything has been translated perfectly over to the PC version.

That Mowgli sure is a swinger. But that's just vine by me (groan). ▼



In terms of what you have to do in the game, we're not talking rocket scientist style complexity. You (as Mowgli) leap about, collecting gems and avoiding the denizens of

CD AND DISC
Minimum PC: 486/33
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: All major soundcards

the jungle, whilst occasionally coming across a huge end of level bad guy that you beat by lobbing bananas at him. That's it! No rewards for plot structure or puzzle elements, but there are some hidden surprises, and at the end of the day if you can just sit back and not have to concentrate too hard, it becomes the ideal antidote for a hard day of A4 Networking.

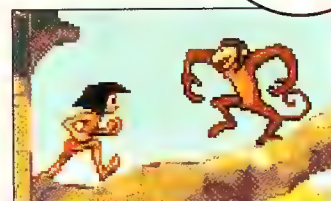
This is a) a very good platform game, and b) a good reason to avoid buying a console this year. Some games take things far too seriously – the Jungle Book doesn't.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Platform game
 Publisher:Virgin
 Price:£TBC
 Contact:(0171) 368 2255

Although this doesn't stretch the boundaries of the PC, at least it's jolly good fun.

7



The Skins Game at Bighorn

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 33MHz, 486, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 6Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster

What supposedly makes this game special is the fact that you play on a digitised rendition of one of the world's greatest golf courses (it says here). In fact, this is partly to blame for why the game is so bad. The reliance of Skins upon the eclectic Bighorn course is its downfall.

The Bighorn course is about 80 per cent rocks. Combine this with low-res digitisation of photos taken with a flat depth of field and what do you get? Answer — a screen full of blocky rocks with a vague blur of green somewhere on the horizon. This wouldn't matter so much if the ability to hit your first shot right wasn't the only actual challenge in the game. The strength/direction bar moves fast and if you're slightly off centre you've had it. You wouldn't be able to tell from where the ball's heading on the initial photo (because you can't) but if you've messed up you have to tee off again, having lost two shots.

Keep the ball on the fairway from the tee, though, and

When Cal asked Adam Peters if he wanted to play the Skins Game at Bighorn, he thought she was propositioning him. We found him in the pub, shaking quietly.



▲ *Hmmm... I think I'll hit it towards something that looks like grass.*

everything else is easy. It's virtually impossible not to make par, especially since putting is a joke (just hit it from anywhere, it'll go in).

Skins is a game of 90 per cent luck based entirely on your tee shot, you can't see what you're doing. Fans of desert flora might like a copy for the pictures, but this is garbage.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Golf simulator
 Publisher:Interplay
 Price:£44.99
 Contact:(01235) 821 666

Without a shadow of a doubt, the worst golf game ever produced.

2



shorts

TRIAZZLE

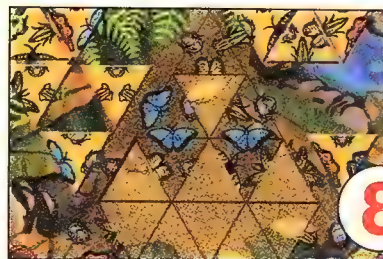
Puzzle game



A simple, rather attractive little game, this. You must arrange a set of triangular tiles on a board, ensuring that the patterns on the sides match — and that's all there is to it. As with all such concepts, it sounds easy, but the reality is rather different with the later levels offering a real challenge. The game is further enhanced by some extremely pretty animated graphics, featur-

ing a variety of rainforest creatures in their natural habitat, although you don't often have enough time to look at them as the game hots up.. It all adds up to a very pleasant gaming experience for those tired of blood and guts and mayhem.

Frontline • £24.99 • 01256 463344 • 33mhz 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, Windows 3.1



8

UNDER PRESSURE

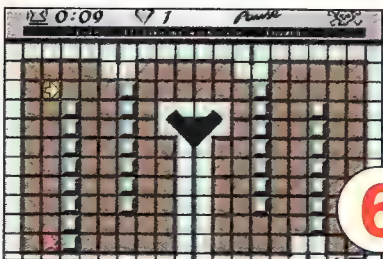
Puzzle game



One of a pair of puzzle games from Millenium that have been written specifically for Windows 95, Under Pressure has you sliding coloured shapes around tortuous maze environments, trying to get them in their correct slots before the timer runs down. Of course, there is an assortment of obstacles to prevent you achieving this aim, and it pays to think about each level before you start, lest you run out of time before you've even decided where to start. The levels are suit-

ably fiendish, and there's plenty of variety, but this is only ever mildly diverting.

GT Interactive • £19.99 • (0171) 258 3791 • 33mhz 486DX, SVGA, 8Mb, Windows 95



6

PRESSURE DROP

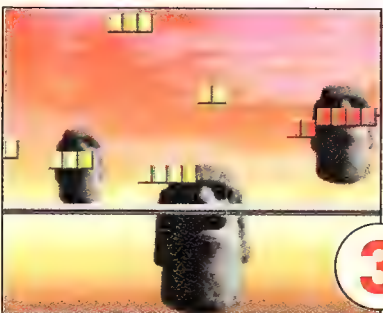
Puzzle game



The second Windows 95-only release from Millenium (see Under Pressure, above), Pressure Drop tries its best to be the next Tetris but, unfortunately, fails miserably. Your task is to destroy the falling coloured blocks before they hit the Pressure Ray — a floating bar in the middle of the screen — by shooting them with your Chromagun and changing all the squares in a block to the same colour. Miss too many and you lose. There are various obstructions and bonuses to complicate matters, but it makes little difference:

this game is tedious in the extreme.

GT Interactive • £19.99 • (0171) 258 3791 • 33mhz 486DX, SVGA, 8Mb, Windows 95



3

DAY OF THE TENTACLE

Cartoon Adventure



If you don't own this game yet, then WHY NOT? Definitely a contender for the best game ever produced for the PC, Day of the Tentacle from LucasArts was the predecessor to Sam and Max and Full Throttle. It features their trademark bizarre humour and twisted, illogical puzzles, in a beautiful cartoon-style adventure that makes you laugh and taxes the grey matter at the same time. The story is too involved to go into here, but suffice to say that mutant tentacles have taken over the world and it is your job to res-

cue humanity — need I say more?

Virgin White Label • £12.99 • (0171) 960 2255 • 33MHz 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, mouse



9

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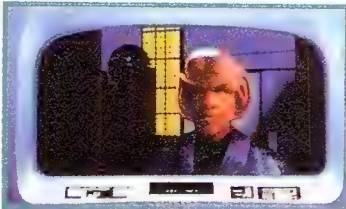
Star Trek: the Next Generation

A
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PART
2

Trekkin' trouble? Fear not for help is at hand, with the second part of our walk-through guide to Star Trek: The Next Generation.

Obligatory starship chase



▲ When you catch up with Aramut in the Nigold system the Ferengi will be tricky. Stick with it.

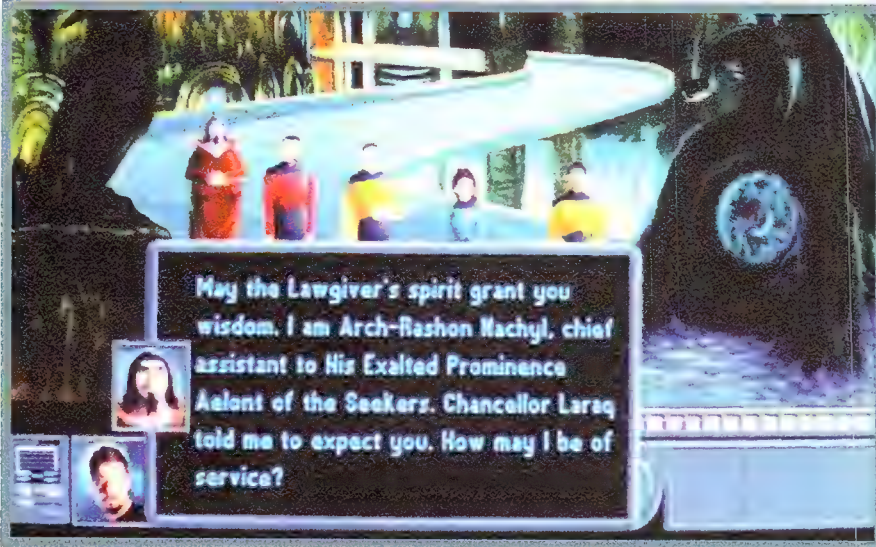


▲ Laraq is a hard man to get a hold of, but it helps if you use a friendly voice. Try the ready room.

STEP 1: The Enterprise flies to the Joward system and then on to the Nigold system where you catch up with Aramut's ship. Raise your shields and lock your weapons but allow him to go. Hail him once he crosses the neutral zone and he will hand over Lydia and give you information by the Romulans in exchange for his freedom.

Use Picard's communicator to hail Data and Troi on Shonisho Epsilon 6. Now ask T'bak to send a message to the planet, wait a moment and you should be contacted from the planet. Tell the chancellor about the refugees and wait while he thinks about letting you beam down. Head to the transporter room, put together your away team (Riker, Data, La Forge and Troi) and take both phasers and tricorders.

Once on the planet get Riker to talk to chancellor Laraq while you walk right to the desert and then to the pyramid. Get Riker to talk to Nachyl and walk towards the sculpture.



▲ Laraq is pretty wary of strangers so make sure you don't scare him off. Just remember, you're only a guest on their planet so don't mess up the bathroom if you have to go. And don't drink all the beer.

◀ nachyl is even more of a big man on Shonisho Epsilon 3. Treat him with respect and have Riker talk to him in a very polite tone of voice. Remember, politeness costs nothing.

Q and A session

STEP 2: Now have Riker talk to the Gatekeeper. The Gatekeeper will ask you several questions, to which the correct answers are:

Q: How does a person reach enlightenment ?

A: I don't know.

Q: By what right are you here ?

A: We might not have any right to be here.

Q: Define your prime directive.

A: It's interpretation depends on the circumstances.

Q: Who are you ?

A: Everyone plays so many roles in life... it is impossible to label them.

Q: What is the central principle of the fifth scroll ?

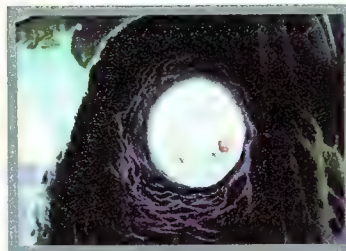
A: Everybody seems to have a different interpretation.

Q: Why are you here ?

A: I'm not sure of that myself.



▲ The Gatekeeper looks a bit spooky but come up with the right answers and he'll let you pass. The key here is to act dumb. Very easy for some people.



▲ When you open the safe you can only take three items, so make sure you get the right ones.

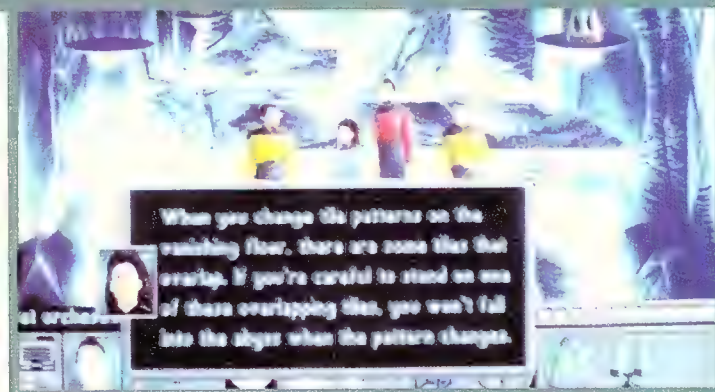
▲ You gotta talk to the guy in the stasis field. Or rather, get him out of it and then talk to him. Data's good at the sort of thing.

STEP 3: The Door will open so walk through and get Data to look at the sign, the panel and the man in the stasis field. Walk back to chancellor Laraq and have Riker to speak with him again. Now walk back to the stasis field and get Data to use the tricorder on the sign. Now use Data on the panel and the field should deactivate. Get Riker to talk to Aelont (and ask everything) and walk to the vault (located on the same screen where Nachyl was standing earlier). Use the thermacode key that Aelont gave you on the vault and take the device, gold ring and staff with the white orb on the end.

Do it all over again

STEP 4: Go back to the start and enter the pyramid at the bottom of the screen. Talk to Stamblyr and listen to his pluviods sing, then use the gold ring on the hole in the wall without a ring. Get Data to insert the device in the instrument at the right of the screen then leave, and enter the other pyramid at the top of the screen. Have Riker talk to Madia, then give her the staff and ask her what is behind the force field. Now play the 'travelling music' orchestration that Stamblyr gave you and you'll be transported to a strange room.

STEP 5: Get to the door at the back of the room by walking on the tiles that appear when you play one of the orchestrations you have (or pick up in the room) each makes a different set of tiles appear. Some overlap, so stand on these before playing the next orchestration. If you are still unsure talk to the other members of your team. (It helps to draw a diagram of each tile pattern). Once you've made it to the door use the blue talisman that Aelont gave you on the niche in the door to open it. Now get the scroll and beam up to the ship. Captain Pentaras' ship will appear and return both scroll and refugees.



▲ Make a map of the tile room. Don't bother trying it without one unless you have an extremely good memory. Unlike me.

Gosh, a real life cliff hanger huh? But would we leave you hanging in mid Trek? Well, we will but only 'til we print the final part of our full solution next month.

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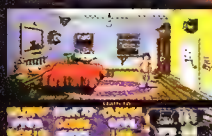
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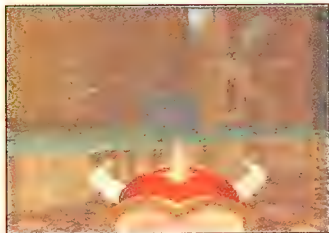
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Cast off your doubts
about our liking for
tips and cheats.
We have a love for
them that verges on
the illegal and we
know you do too,
so here's...

Short TIPS

Heretic



Here's the complete, nay definitive, yes definitely definitive list of Heretic cheats (although obviously we have to allow for the possibility that we might have missed one). Just type in the codes while you're playing (they're not case sensitive) and spoil all the hard work that went into programming it.

QUICKEN	God mode
RAMBO	All weapons/Ammo
GIMMExx	Artifacts (a-j) (1-9) [d does not work]
SKEL	All skeleton keys
RAVMAP	Changes map mode [must be in map mode]
KITTY	Toggle clipping
ENGAGExx	Level warp (episode/map)
PONCE	Full health
SHAZAM	Toggles weapon power
MASSACRE	Kills ALL monsters on level
COCKADOODLEDOO	Turn yourself into a chicken
IDDQD	Instant death
IDKFA	No weapons/Ammo

Companions of Xanth

Oh well, just a quick one then. Pressing Alt+F10 during the game should enable a cheat menu allowing you to go to different parts of the game. Now, don't say we're not good to you.



Raptor

It's an oldie, but it's a goldie (fingers crossed), it's Raptor. Before you run the game, type "SET S_HOST=CAS-TLE" (all in caps). Start a new game and you'll be in GOD mode. GOD mode does not sadly allow you to correct all the wrongs in the world (it's only a game for goodness sake) but you will have all the weapons and an almost obscene amount of money.



Command and Conquer

Thanks to John Douglas for a couple of very speedily sent tips for Virgin's new strategy game.
If, at the end of the level, you destroy the shed where the harvester is stored but discover the harvester gone, you may find it running over your soldiers when they try to attack it. Best way around the problem is to use twelve soldiers. Position four in a diamond shape around it but far enough away that they will have to move to get in range. Start them all off at the same time and while the harvester is busy killing the first four, use the other eight to blast it to pieces. Sorted.
Another tip is, at the end of a level, when you only have one enemy to kill, sell everything you have and make a ton of cash. It will boost your score.



Dark Forces

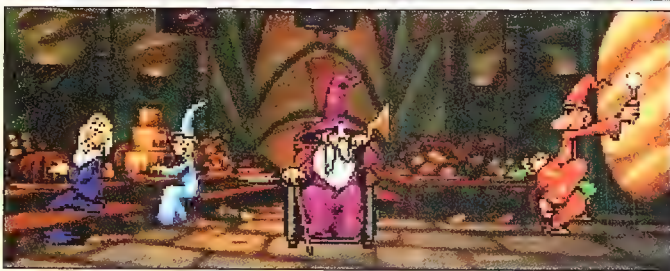
Some people say that the best part about travelling is the journey, not the getting there. For those who disagree here are the cheats to skip to any given level in the classic Dark Forces.

LASECBASE	Secret Base	Mission I
LATALAY	Talay	Mission II
LASEWERS	Anoat City	Mission III
LATESTBASE	Research Facility	Mission IV
LAGROMAS	Gromas Mines	Mission V
DTENTION	Detention Centre	Mission VI
LARAMSHED	Ramsees Hed	Mission VII
LAROBOTICS	Robotics Facility	Mission VIII
LANARSHADA	Nar Shaddaa	Mission IX
LAJABSHIP	Jabba's Ship	Mission X
LAIMCITY	Imperial City	Mission XI
LAFUELSTAT	Fuel Station	Mission XII
EXECUTOR	Executor	Mission XIII
LAARC	Arc Hammer	Mission XIV



Discworld

When you reach the Dragon at the end of the game and launch a rocket at it (with Mambo, the swamp dragon) it'll miss and the Dragon will send a huge fireball in the direction of your face. Grab the love custard pie from your luggage and use it on the Dragon when the screen flicks to it. The Dragon is smitten by love and the first thing she sees is Mambo, the dragon of her dreams — so they all live happily ever after.



Danger

Do not attempt the cheats marked with the danger icon unless you have access to a file editor, such as PC Tools or Xtree Gold, and know what you are doing. ALWAYS back up your files before editing, so that you can restore the originals. PC Review will not accept responsibility for any damage to data caused through using these cheats.

Rise of the Triad

Did you know that if you start ROTT when your system clock indicates that it's one of five different holidays, the "group picture" of the five main characters changes.

Easter		Lorelei Ni wears Easter Bunny ears.
Cinco de Mayo	05/05/XX	Ian wears a sombrero.
Independence Day	07/04/XX	Doug holds an American flag.
Halloween	10/31/XX	Thi wears a witch's hat.
Christmas	12/25/XX	Taradino wears a Santa Claus hat.

There is a way to get all five "holiday hats" in Rise of the Triad to show up on the screen at the same time. If you finish the game the right way, and destroy all the larvae in the last level, watch the credits, you'll get to a screen that says "The HUNT is victorious. The End." Let it sit there for about a minute or two, and you'll get another "The End" screen where all five "holiday hats" are shown at once.



Daedalus Encounter

Do you burn with a desire to jump to any part of the game that you wish? Then take the heat out of things with this cheat.

From the Main Menu select GAME. Hit ALT-F5. Pick JUMP TO and it will show thumbnails of various scenes in the game. Just click on one to jump to it.

If you'd rather just skip individual puzzles then press ALT-SHIFT and the first letter of the puzzle's name.



Slipstream 5000

Holy Hex editing money madness. Get stacks of unearned cash with this hack from Vidar Nisen who seems to have such an obsession with money that he's sent a "fill my pockets with folding green" hacks for Slipstream 5000.

DANGER!

Save your Game in the first Savegame slot. Load a hex editor and edit the SLIPSTRM.SAV file.

Save game nr.	Address	Change to
1	00E	FF
1	00E5	FF
1	00E6	FF

X-Com: Terror from the Deep

It's fine having all those scientists beavering away inventing things, but come the end of the month you have to pay them. One way to avoid paying up of course, is to sack them before the end of the month. But there is another, more cunning way.



Have two bases approximately equivalent to each other (both doing research with roughly the same living quarters) and the same number of scientists and just before end of the month (last day, last hour), transfer ALL of the scientists working on base one to base two, and all the scientists working on base two to base one (i.e. they swap). As the end of month comes along, neither side has their scientists (they are in transit) so no salary is paid!

Just remember that we always want tips, cheats, maps and walkthroughs. No pressure, but if you fail to send some in then an alien spacecraft might and we stress, might — abduct you from your home and subject you to all sorts of experiments. You'll probably be OK, but do you really want to take the risk?

Send your contributions to:

Tips, PC Review, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

P.S Remember what happened to Christopher Walken in "Communion".

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MULTIMEDIA

review

Julia Child

Home Cooking with Master Chefs



Thankfully multimedia releases' subject matter has become more varied. The Star Trek Omnipedia and Apollo 13 should satisfy sci-fi buffs, whilst food fans can taste some Home Cooking. Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC REVIEW gives marks out of 10 to multimedia products. The score takes into account elements such as presentation, ease of use and how well the subject is covered. We are pretty strict on multimedia. Five is average, so anything rated higher is better than average and a product has to be extremely good to score a coveted eight or nine.

High Lights



Star Trek	106
Van Gogh	115
Apollo 13	117
The Nile	118

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 386SX, Windows 3.1/95

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All Windows sound cards

Ask Cal Jones to cook for you and she'll black both your eyes. But can Julia Child part her from her Pot Noodle?

I'm not much of a cook. It's not that I can't cook — I can knock up some perfectly edible dishes if the occasion demands — it's just that I can never really be bothered. Since my one-room studio flat is not exactly the ideal place to hold a dinner party, I usually only cook for myself — normally a case of boiling up some pasta, opening a can of tuna and a jar of pesto sauce and mixing them all together. It tastes better than it sounds, believe me.

That's not to say that I don't appreciate a good meal. I do like a bit of the old haute cuisine — providing that someone else is paying, of course. But cook it myself? Now, that's too much like hard work. Still, if ever I did feel the urge

to inflict my cooking on a few friends, I could do a lot worse than seek inspiration from Julia Child and her 16 master chef chums.

Julia, if you haven't heard of her, is America's answer to Delia Smith. She's probably forgotten more about cooking than most people learn in a lifetime, which is almost certainly why Microsoft has chosen her to front this rather nice piece of multimedia. Just as plonk expert Oz Clarke made his contribution to Microsoft's superb Wine Guide, Julia is the friendly face of Home Cooking, sharing with you her extensive knowledge of kitchen utensils, taking you on a tour of her pantry, introducing each of the 16 featured chefs and whisk-

ing up a few culinary delights of her own. The lady is undoubtedly talented, just as this CD is unquestionably extensive. However, the problem is this: she sounds, well, a bit odd. Imagine Monty Python's Terry Jones doing an impression of a middle-aged housewife, add a mid-Atlantic accent and you have something that sounds scarily close to Julia Child. At first it's hard to keep a straight face, but after a while it becomes irritating. Yes, it may be politically incorrect to point this out, but that's the truth of it. Our Julia has a funny voice.

Best ingredients

Beyond that, Home Cooking is a good product. It has all the polish that you'd expect from Microsoft — it looks attractive, is easy to find your way around and the topics are well-linked so that



START HERE



Like Wine Guide, Julia Child has a pictorial contents screen. From here you can visit Julia's kitchen, meet the featured chefs, look up recipes or take a cookery lesson.



So let's meet the chefs, shall we? There are 16 in all, so click on either the name or face to select the chef of your choice. I'm going to go for the fat guy — he looks like he enjoys his food.



The fat guy is Jan Birnbaum, experienced chef and a fine advert for his own cooking. His career is detailed on the right of the screen, along with favourite ingredients and cooking methods.



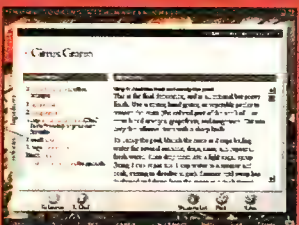
Each chef also gives his or her favourite cooking tips. Jan Birnbaum's tips vary from releasing the flavour of certain foods to choosing herbs by colour (or even color, as it says here).



Julia has a few tips of her own. Visit Julia's Kitchen for tips on knives, cookware and crockery, wines to go with food and staple foods (herbs, oils, eggs and so on) to keep in your pantry.



You can also click on words highlighted in red to find out more about them. This, if you hadn't guessed, is a grapefruit — there's information about the fruit and tips on buying them.

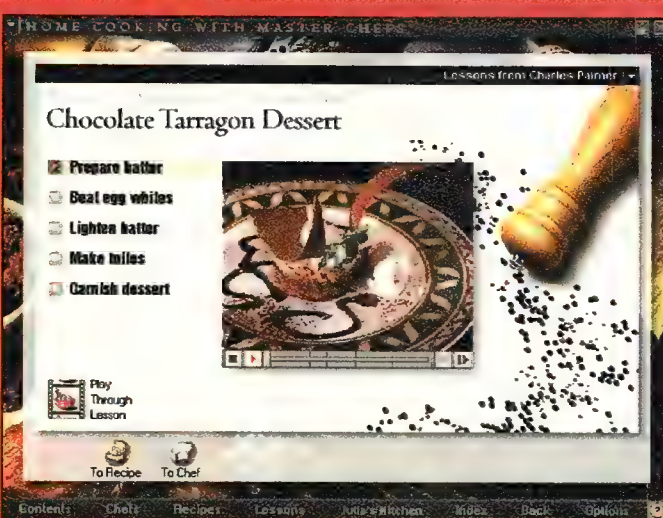


And here it is. From here you can make a shopping list, print out the recipe itself or follow a lesson. Quantities can also be adjusted according to how many people you want to feed.



You can also turn the page to find out his favourite recipes. Citrus Gratin, a cocktail of citrus fruit in a foamy sauce, sounds tempting — I think I'll get the recipe.

you can look up a recipe, find out more about the ingredients and then learn how to cook them without getting lost in the menu system. There are extensive tutorials from the star chefs (OK, so I'd never heard of any of them before but I assume that they're well-known in the States) on everything from filleting salmon to chopping garlic — all in easy to follow steps. And there are over 100 recipes, many of them inventive in the extreme.



Or take a cookery lesson. Chef Charles Palmer takes you through his interesting tarragon chocolate dessert, from whipping up the basic batter to garnishing the finished dish with chocolate tuiles. Yum. From here you can also find out more about the chef, get the recipe or simply head back to the main menu.



There are over 100 recipes on this CD, ranging from soups and salads to desserts. Cooking up a Cordon Bleu meal for six will be a piece of cake with this CD. There are, however, only a couple of vegetarian dishes, so non-meat eaters may be frustrated, and exotic meals such as curries are also thin on the ground.



Would you think of adding tarragon to a chocolate mousse?

No, I wouldn't either, but with a little help from Home Cooking you too can be a master in the art of the successful juxtaposition of bizarre ingredients. Trust me.

It's not a culinary utopia, though. Firstly, and from a purely practical standpoint, it's a bit difficult to follow a tutorial when your PC's in one room and your cooker's in another. OK, so I know one person who keeps his computer in the kitchen, but he has a tough time defrosting a burger without letting the whole thing go up in flames, never mind creating a cordon-bleu meal from scratch. For the rest of us, it's just impractical. You can print out the recipes if you've a printer to hand, but as far as the tutorials go, you need to memorise them before you can put your knowledge to use in the kitchen.

Veggie blues

The second gripe is that Home Cooking doesn't really cater for vegetarians. This doesn't bother me because I'm a meat eater, but herbivores will notice a distinct lack of animal-free meals. Side dishes yes, but I counted only one veggie main course in the whole CD. This is a bit of an oversight since there are a large number of vegetarians in the world, and not all of these are content to subsist on veggie burgers for the rest of their lives.

Overall, though, this is a competent and well-produced product, and would-be chefs will find it a good starting place to learn the tricks of the culinary trade.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Cooking tutorial

Publisher: Microsoft

Price: £29.99

Contact: (01734) 270001

PROS

Marvellously presented, practical and varied...

CONS

...unless your PC is in your kitchen, you can't use the lessons while you cook.

8

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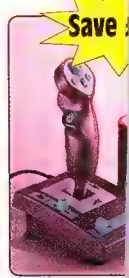
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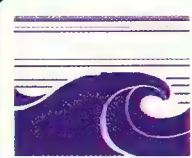
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Star Trek Omnipedia

Pat Fox goes on a five-year mission to seek out facts and pointless trivia about all things Trek.

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 33MHz 486DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA 256

Sound: Sound blaster compatible

Did you know that Spock's favourite drink is Altair Water, that the Enterprise originally ran on Lithium crystals, and that the pointy tube bits on the back of the starships are called

Nacelles? If so, then you probably have absolutely no need of the Star Trek Omnipedia.

A detailed repository of all things Trekular, compiled by people who worked on the series themselves, the Omnipedia makes a creditable attempt at combining Star Trek-style visuals – the interface takes the form of the Enterprise's own computer, complete

with the genuine female voice (supplied by Majel Barrett, wife of Gene Rodenberry, fact fans) — with the huge body of data that has built up around the Star Trek universe over the last 30-odd years.

The information is presented in a number of forms; a simple alphabetical database, which features hot links to related subjects; a chronology, which actually relates a potted history of time from the Big Bang to the 123rd century; resources, which divide the information into thematic groups; and topics, a group of presentations on subjects such as Captain Kirk, or the history of the Enterprise, narrated by Mark Lenard (that's Sarek, father of Spock, to all you non-Trekkers out there).

That is illogical, Captain

In addition to all this textual data, there are many still photos and some video footage too, but strangely some major characters — Chekov for example, or Riker, lack a direct video link, while some relatively minor characters, such as T'Pol (the Vulcan priestess, not the sad eighties group), have footage all to themselves. And strangely, there is little mention of Voyager, the newest spin-off, but that may just be because it is so recent.

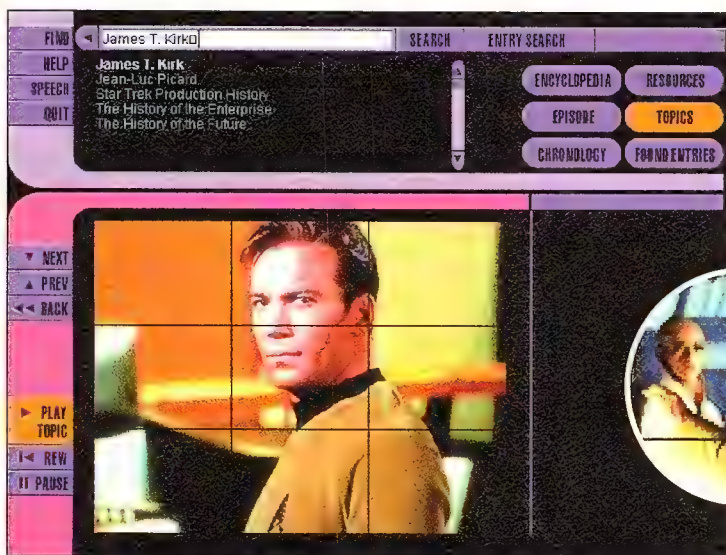
Even more fun can be had by implementing the voice-activation support, which, given the right hardware, allows you to control the Omnipedia by speaking commands into a microphone. Unfortunately, speech recognition technology itself is more than a

little flaky, so the results are unpredictable to say the least.

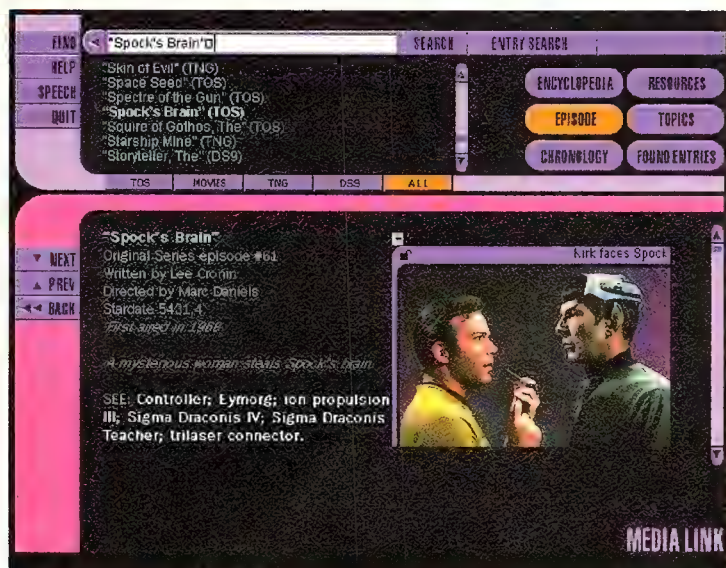
Once in a while, the interface creaks a little — a piece of footage might be corrupted, or a link goes awry — but in the main, this is a seamlessly integrated package, and the depth of its coverage is hard to question. Absolute die hard Trekkers might find faults, but there was certainly more information here than I (a casual Trek fan) could ever be bothered to trawl through except out of idle curiosity.

More video footage would have been nice, and a bit more interactivity, but as an authoritative Star Trek reference, this is certainly worthwhile.

Live long and prosper...



▲ Ol' rug head himself, back in his less rotund days.



▲ My favourite episode ever involved the theft of Spock's brain. A classic.



▲ Ahh, the good old NCC-1701 at bay. What a stirring sight...



▲ He's only wearing that to cover his bald patch — which has unfortunately spread over his cranium.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Multimedia reference

Publisher: Albac

Price: £59.95

Contact: (01626) 332233

PROS

Everything you wanted to know about Star Trek is here. Probably.

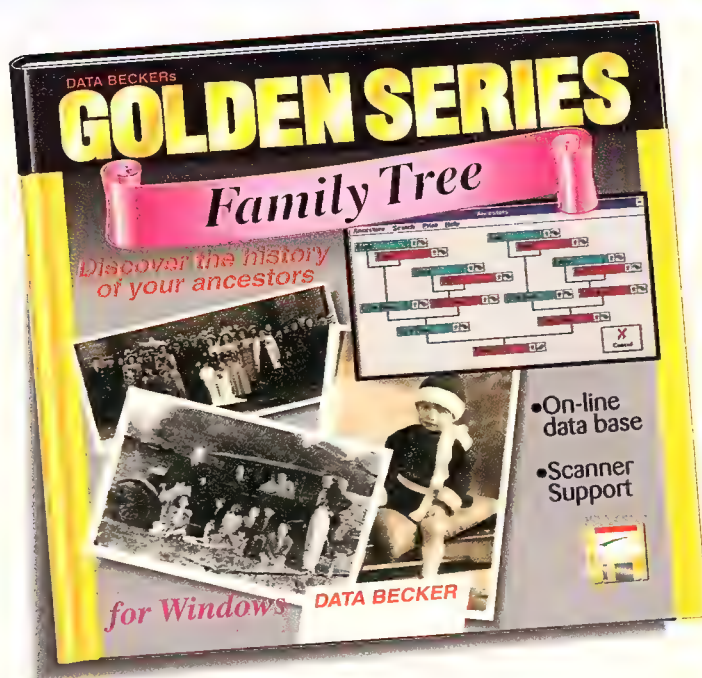
CONS

Occasionally slow interface. Not enough video footage.

7

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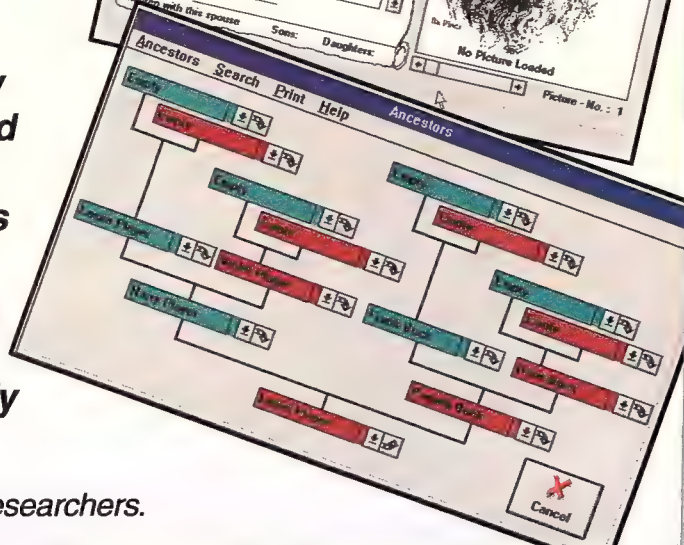
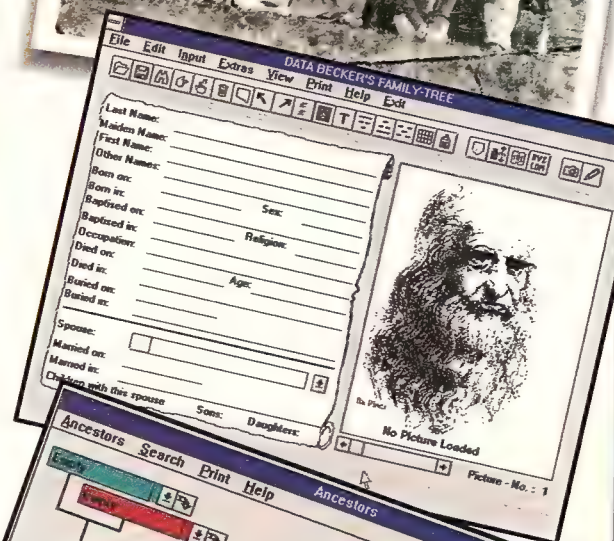
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◀ One of the nicest things about Van Gogh (the CD-ROM, not necessarily the man) is that it's very neatly presented.

▲ Vinny's letters make depressing reading, but provide quite some insight into the life of this tortured artist.

Van Gogh

'What have we got ear?' asks Martin Klimes, browsing through EMME Interactive's latest foray into the art world.

A painter's lot is not a happy one — at least not if you're Vincent Van Gogh. Moping around the French countryside, writing ever more depressing letters to your brother, and yes, even hacking off parts of your anatomy — still, you can't help feeling for the poor tortured soul. Or, if you're like me, after about five minutes of reading about his traumatic existence, you feel like shouting 'Oi, Vinny! Stop being such a grumpy guts and get on with the painting, pur-leasee.'

Fortunately for us multimedia types, that's exactly what he did. Although hundreds of paintings later, culminating in a particularly brooding piece showing

a cornfield under leaden skies with a handful of crows in it, he topped himself with a revolver in self-same field. Sorry if I spoil the ending for anybody, but it's an interesting if thoroughly downbeat story all the way through — well worth the read anyway. Interspersed with many of his famous works and not a few of his less well known oeuvres, the Van Gogh CD-ROM is quite an attractive proposition.

My one disappointment is that it seems as though EMME weren't that bothered when it came to having someone proof-read the text. The sometimes rough layouts are almost excusable, but

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 25MHz, 386SX, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows - compatible sound card

there's a hell of a lot of typos throughout, something which is quite off-putting.

Sneaking admiration

That aside, I had a sneaking admiration for this product. I was particularly enamoured of the music section, where favourite ditties from the day by the likes of Debussy and Ravel are played alongside collections of paintings. And text links the whole shebang together with insights into the lives of both composer and painter. It's a new way of making hundreds of similar paintings much more interesting.

The narration is informative and useful, the interface is friendly, with decent hypertext throughout, and the paintings are well reproduced. It's certainly no substitute for popping down to a big gallery and seeing some of the originals themselves, but because the entire collection is split up across hundreds of locations this is probably the best way to see all of them, and get a handle on Van Gogh's turbulent life.



▲ Our Vinny himself — with ear.

PCR VERDICT

Type: Multimedia reference
Publisher: EMME Interactive
Price: £39.99
Contact: (01923) 211007

PROS

A fascinating insight into Van Gogh's life, with plenty of well-reproduced paintings.

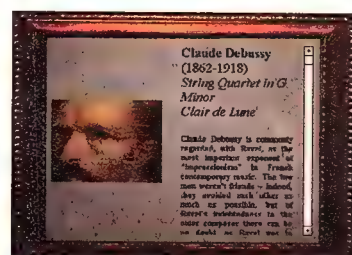
CONS

The odd typo and occasional badly laid-out page — but don't turn your nose up at it.

7



▲ When finding out about the life and times of Van Gogh, there are various different ways to navigate the pages. You can surf to pics from the main menu, chronologically, or by this rather fine map of the regions he lived in.



▲ One interesting idea, which more or less works, is to put some of the man's art against the music of the day. The package talks about the tunes and exactly what Van Gogh was doing while they were being composed.

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 33MHz 386DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Days of Rage

Beirut 1982 to 1985 — not a good place to be. Cal Jones tours this war-torn city from the comfort of her PC.

A few months ago I moved away from Peckham, the rather grim area of South London where I had the misfortune to spend most of my life. I can't say that I was sorry to go. Rough, dirty, smelly and violent — it's the sort of place that taxi drivers refuse to drop you for fear of being ambushed at traffic lights by gangs of knife-wielding youths. I'm not joking.

But Peckham is a picnic compared to Beirut. To quote *Days of Rage*, "Beirut isn't just a city. It's a symbol of a particular kind of twentieth century madness." And that is the very sentiment that this CD-ROM tries to put across.

Days of Rage is an unusual piece of multimedia. It is not a travelogue, an educational toy or a glossy interactive coffee table book, but an example of photojournalism at its best. Based on the award-winning work of photographer Judah Passow, who covered the conflict between 1982 and 1985, it does not attempt to sensationalise the war but chronicles the lives of those affected by it. As such it is a very visual product, relying on the strength of the images to put its point across. The photographs

▼ You can select photographs at random from the lightbox menu. As you move your cursor across the small pictures, a larger representation of each photograph appears at the bottom of the screen.



▲ Click on the map icon to see where the photograph was taken.

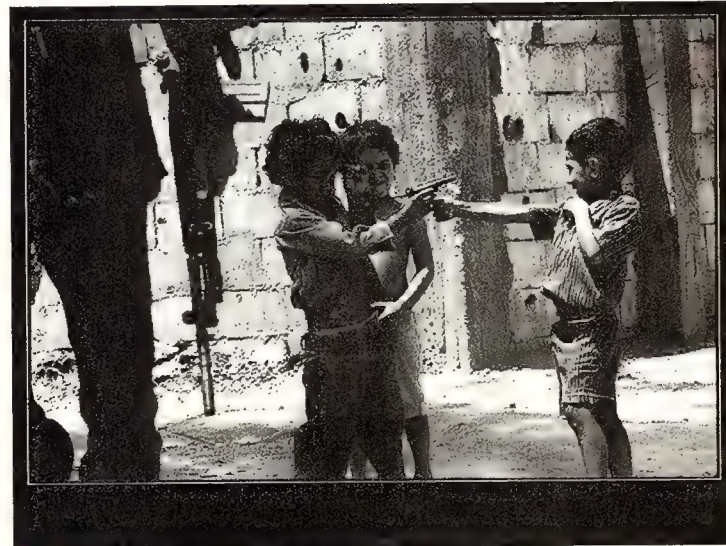
have a stark beauty of their own, ranging as they do from the harrowing to the plain bizarre, and although they speak for themselves, all are accompanied by spoken accounts from Israeli and Lebanese citizens.

Journalistic essays

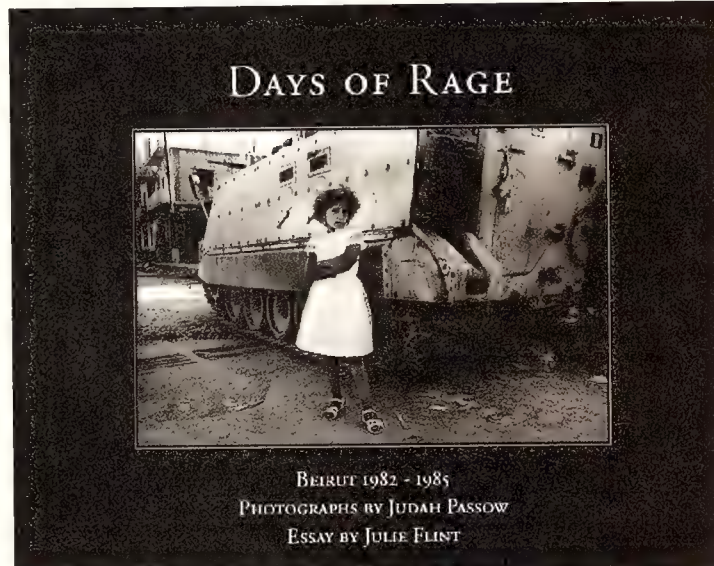
The photographs form the core of the product, but there are also essays by journalist Julie Flint and Passow himself. There are also statistics which give details of the main religions and factions involved, the cost of the war (both in terms of money and human lives), and the casualties.

Don't go buying this CD expecting a historical account of the troubles in Beirut — it is more a catalogue of Passow's work than anything else — but the information is there if you need it. Even if the statistics are not of particular interest to you, they add a bit of weight to the program and make surprising reading.

Days of Rage is a very good product, no doubt about it. It holds together well and is easy to find your way around — the interface is intuitive, with icons that remain hidden until you move the cursor over them. You may not feel drawn towards a CD which covers such a difficult subject, but the superb photography and balanced reporting makes it extremely worthwhile. I can only describe it as eye-opening.



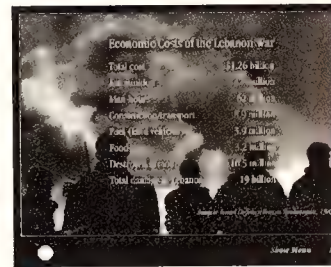
▲ The sight of children playing with guns is chilling, but sadly not unusual in a city where factions recruit boys as young as 11-years-old.



▲ War may be raging, but life goes on for Beirut's citizens. Many of the photographs contrast everyday life with images of conflict.



▲ These young men relaxing are actually snipers.



▲ Facts and figures show the cost of war, both in money and lives.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Photojournalism

Publisher: Multimedia Solution

Price: £49.00

Contact: (01132) 343142

Pros:

Wonderful photographs, all beautifully presented and intelligently documented.

Cons:

The subject matter may be a bit grim for some.

8



Tom Hanks?
No thanks.
This is the real
story of Apollo
13, as Gordon
Houghton
discovered...

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz, 386DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows-compatible sound card

It was bound to happen. The thirteenth Apollo space craft was launched at 13 minutes past the hour, and disaster struck two days later — on April 13th. Almost a year after Neil Armstrong first walked on the moon, NASA's third attempt at a lunar landing turned sour when Apollo 13's oxygen tanks exploded.

The first CD in this two CD box set gives you the whole story from beginning to end. There's a cross-referenced encyclopaedia which includes a full mission transcript, details of the Apollo program, audio and picture galleries, and an analysis of exactly what went wrong on the night of April 13th, 1970. In addition you get a slide-show of mission highlights, some video footage of the astronauts, a rudimentary 3D animation of a journey to the moon, and an interview with Jim Lovell to boot.

The second CD contains an encyclopaedia of space flight and a basic drawing program which includes, amongst other goodies, some cute pieces of space clip art. The encyclopaedia is arguably the most interesting part of the whole package, because it's crammed with information on everything from the early days of space flight to plans for future missions.

Space doubt

The problem with both of these CDs is presentation. The interface on all three programs is easy enough to use, but

Return to Control Room	The Apollo Program	The Flight of Apollo 13	Mission Operations	The Cast of Apollo 13	Image Gallery	Audio Gallery
EXIT	The Crew of Apollo 13	Apollo Space Vehicle	Air-to-Ground Transcript	What Went Wrong	Appendix	BACK

Farewell Aquarius (115:38:41 to 142:55:12 GET)

05:08 16:24 CDR Houston, Aquarius

05:08 16:26 CC Go ahead, Jim.

05:08 16:29 CDR Do you have any more updates for us?

05:08 16:32 CC We've still got a LM update, but we strongly recommend that you and Jack work as hard as you can sleeping for about the next 5 hours. Fred can handle it.

05:08 16:42 CDR Okay. That's what we'll do. We'll put Fred on watch here, and Jack and I will take it easy, and if Fred copies the LM update, well, then we'll all start from fresh in the morning.

05:08 16:56 CC You bet.

05:08 23:44 CC Aquarius, Houston Over

05:08 23:48 LMP All right, go ahead, Vance.

05:08 23:50 CC Okay, Fred. Two - three things. First thing is we need a docking angle check as soon as you can conveniently get it. Second point, you're free to drink all the descent stage water you want, if that wasn't

the displays are stark and unattractive. The stress is more on facts than fun, which makes this less likely to appeal to kids or to anyone who's looking for a Dorling Kindersley-style introduction to space. As a rocket nerd though, I couldn't care less about looks: this is the most comprehensive package available on space flight, with masses of data, loads of interesting pictures and some decent video sequences. Casual buyers beware, though.

▲ **This is the kind of depth that keen space fans will appreciate: the Apollo 13 mission transcript reproduced in its entirety.**

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Space reference

Publisher: Deverill Business

Price: £60.00

Contact: (01202) 722554

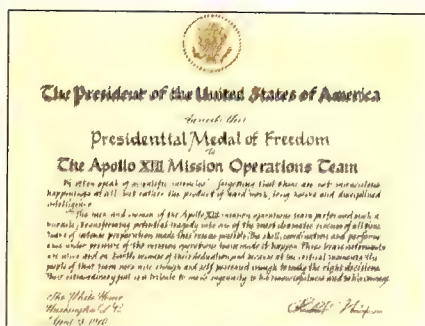
PROS

Bags of information on the Apollo 13 mission and the history of space exploration.

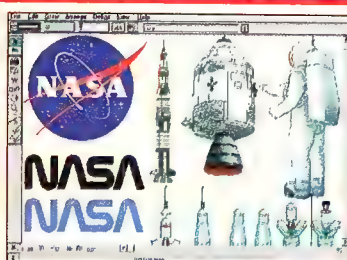
CONS

Functional presentation and an emphasis on facts over frills lessen its appeal.

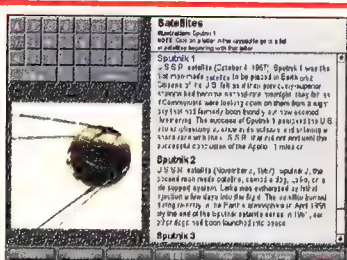
8



▲ **This Presidential Medal of Freedom certificate awarded to the Mission Ops team is just one of dozens of fascinating digitised documents.**



▲ **The package contains two CDs. On one you get SpaceAGE Draw, a complete drawing program with over 1,000 clip art images, and SpaceAGE, a multimedia encyclopaedia of space flight. On the other you can find out exactly what went wrong with Apollo 13.**





Nile Passage to Egypt



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 20MHz 486SX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible cards

The world's longest river is steeped in history. Gordon Houghton hops aboard a felucca and heads downstream.

The Nile is probably the most famous river in the world. The Amazon might rival it for length, but it isn't as important in terms of ancient history, geography, exploration, literature, culture and tourism. The aim of the oddly-named Nile Passage to Egypt (NPTE) is to encompass all of these ancient and modern facets on one CD.

It's pretty successful, too. As soon as you board your personal sailboat at Lake Victoria, you're completely free to explore all aspects of life on the Nile. A map lets you move quickly between

locations and play one of five unusual games. A camera takes pictures and records text for use in your very own interactive journal. There's a media player which offers 18 themed tours, hundreds of pictures and dozens of video sequences, all accompanied by detailed information. Finally, at every stop en route you can view the landscape in four directions.

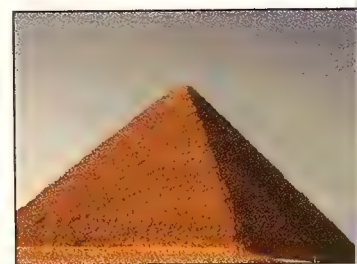
Cruise control

The only problem I had with NPTE was its operating speed. I ran it on a DX2 with 8Mb RAM and a quad speed

drive, and it took a significant amount of time to load pictures and videos. There's also a sizeable buffer which can lead to mistakes during menu selections. Neither of these features is exceptionally annoying, but they do interfere with the enjoyment of your journey up the Nile.

Even so, this is a very good package. Forking out £700 for a Nile cruise might provide you with the experience of a lifetime, but this is undoubtedly the next best thing — it's educational, great fun to use, and exploits the potential of multimedia extremely well. If it wasn't for the

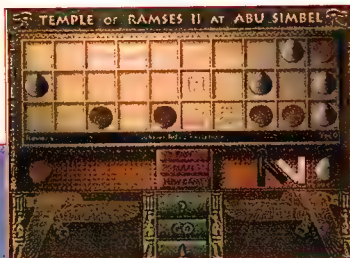
slightly sluggish presentation it would deserve a mark or two more.



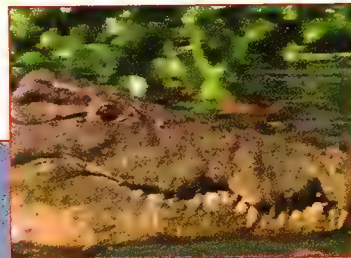
▲ **Egyptians – clever blokes or aliens? You won't find the answer on this disc.**



▲ **Text and snapshots taken during your journey are automatically recorded in your personal journal.**



▲ **This is senet, one of five different games you can play at any time. On-line rules and help are included.**



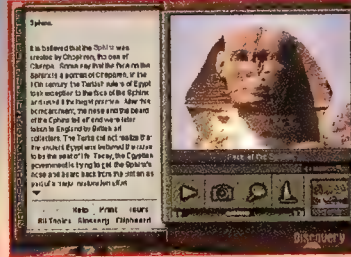
▲ **43 video segments offer you footage of everything from views of the local wildlife to a tour of Abu Simbel.**



▲ **Camels are ill-tempered, uncomfortable to ride and they smell bad. Do not ride them. Look at pictures instead.**



▲ **The map is the quickest way to explore the Nile from Lake Victoria to Alexandria.**



▲ **The Media Viewer gives you pictures and information on over 350 topics.**



▲ **Your journey takes place aboard a felucca, a traditional Nile sailing vessel. From here you can examine photographs and videos, play games and even write your own travelogue.**

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Multimedia reference

Publisher: Astrion

Price: £39.99

Contact: (0181) 282 0011

PROS

An informative and enjoyable journey, packed with options.

CONS

The presentation is a bit slow, particularly when loading graphics.

7

shorts

3D GARDEN DESIGNER 2

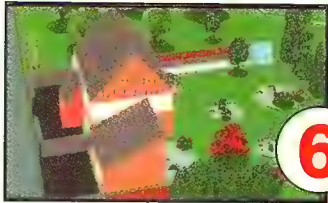
Utility



If you're the kind who wants blooms aplenty without the dirty fingernails, this is for you. Create your own landscaped masterpiece by picking your garden size and shape, then overflow it with the 600 different types of trees, shrubs and plants to hand. Not only do you get a wealth of plant life to

play with, you also receive info and colour stills on each, plus handy growers tips and the chance to watch your saplings rising over the years from a range of different zoom in/zoom out 3D viewpoints.

Europress Software £29.99
01625 859333 • 386DX, SVGA, double speed CD-ROM, hard disk, 4Mb RAM.



6

YOUNG SCIENTIST

Edutainment



With a name like Young Scientist, it's not too far fetched to expect loads of interactive widgets to fiddle and create things with — but no such luck. Instead you get instructions on how to make useless Blue Peter-esque contraptions, — jigsaw puzzles, pairing games, hidden pictures, silly sorters and a painting program with an eco-friendly theme. There are four cutesy

environments to explore. Sweet but very basic. For youngsters only.

Europress Software £25.99
01625 859333 • 386DX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, CD-ROM, hard disk, 4Mb RAM.



6

THE FISH WHO COULD WISH

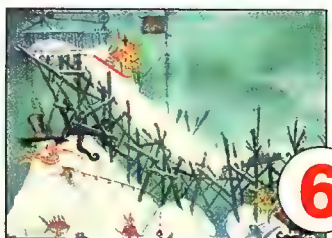
Entertainment



It's interactive story time and to be fair, this one's quite a giggle, if on the pricey side. The fact that it's narrated by the most excellent Robbie Coltrane is a big plus point to a package which tells the story of a fish whose wishes come true. The screens are nicely drawn with good sound and animation. Most of the stuff on the different screens is interactive — producing a

series of bangs, whistles, lights and cutesy animations. Sweet stuff, but not worth this amount of dosh.

Oxford University Press £29.99
01865 267979 • 386DX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, CD-ROM, hard disk, 4Mb RAM.



6

CHRISTMAS STORY

Entertainment



I'm sorry folks, I know this one's probably aimed at the youngsters, but if they wanted a sickly sweet version of the nativity thrust down their throats, I'm sure they could get a lot more out of the bible — at a much better price. The 12 different screens are beautifully drawn and give a scant outline of the birth of Christ, but the interactivity is pretty pitiful — a few bland words from the various characters on screen if you click on them is

about the highlight (the animal noises in the stable scene were accompanied with phew, at least two animations per animal). Nice looking, but way too costly.

Oxford University Press £29.99
01865 267979 • 386DX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, CD-ROM, hard disk, 4Mb RAM.



5

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[illegible]



GET SERIOUS **review**

MESH Junior PC



Andy Leaning takes Mesh's Junior 486 on a whistle-stop tour of Doom, Word, Descent, and Xara Studio. All aboard please...

Price: £724.97

Manufacturer: MESH

Contact: 0181 452 1111

Thud, thud, thud, arrgghh. Dammit! A close quarter gun fight with three monsters in Doom on this 486DX66 system revealed it to be a snappy performer. My rapid pounding of the control-key produced a stream of lead from which only two of the monsters survived, their death shown in glorious high-detail. Turning rapidly to face a third I wasn't hammered by the jumps in screen update normally associated with running Doom on a 486. Sadly, although the machine was fast enough, I wasn't, as the screaming death cry from the 25 watt speakers let me know. So the Mesh Junior 486 is great with games. But how would it fare with Windows and Word?

This is where most low-price PCs fall down, with the Junior being no exception. It comes with a base 4Mb of RAM, which isn't enough these days for most applications, especially Windows 95.

But that's not to say it isn't good value. Seven hundred notes buys you a 486DX2-66 powered PC, 14" monitor,

double-speed CD-ROM drive, medium sized hard drive and speakers. First time PC users will find its performance reasonable, but not brilliant. The Diamond Stealth S3-based graphics card punches visuals onto the screen, while the 486DX 66 slices through programs and data. Sadly this good start is limited by a standard IDE hard drive.

Having said this it's still faster than many other 486 PCs. What really makes the Mesh Junior stand out from the crowd is its expandability. If you're planning to use the Junior as a low cost base from which to build a more powerful system you won't be disappointed.

Truth, however, is in the testing, so off came the lid and in went an extra 12Mb RAM, into the three spare sockets, with a brand new Seagate IDE hard drive going into the vacant 3 1/2" drive bay (leaving another two 5 1/4" spare bays). On top of these I added a network card into one of two free ISA slots, and a local bus EIDE interface card into one of the two empty VESA Local Bus sockets. Installing all of this was simple, existing cables are tied back, and the sockets easy to get at — there was even plenty of room to get my fingers in behind the drive bay when fitting the hard drive.

It's unusual to find a low-priced system which experienced users can

upgrade and customise, and that new users be immediately comfortable with, although they'll also find the need to upgrade the basic unit. But Mesh has managed it and deserves applause for its excellent efforts.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Hardware

System requirements:
Not Applicable

Ease of use:
Plug it all in and go. No problems here.

Performance:
For a 486 based PC it's more than respectable.

Value for money:
Packs a punch and does it on a budget.
Superb.

8

This month our PC Review Labs' bench testing gets up a full head of steam as we round-up some of the best V.34 modems around. We've put six models to the test and tweaked the testing and results reporting to help you find all the information you need much more easily. In particular check out the panels showing the scores each modem achieved, plus our final thoughts and verdicts.

Starting this month we've also increased the size of the Get Serious reviews section. There's now 11 pages overflowing with the very latest and greatest of products. We've also changed the look which means we can now give more space to the products you're interested in, and as a consequence show them in much more detail too.

This month's shareware section has metamorphosed too. It's now lurking under a different guise at the front of the magazine and all the shareware we feature can be found on our cover CD.
Andy Leaning

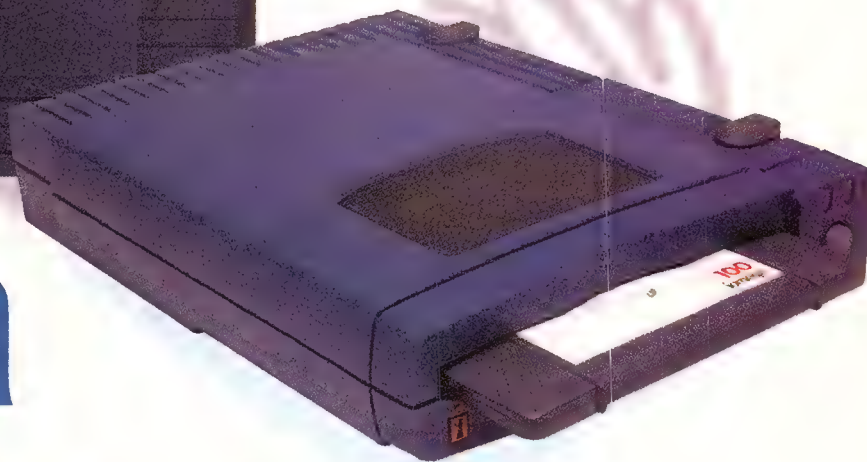
High Lights



Office 95 ... 128

Style Writer ... 135

Corel Draw 6 ... 136



lomega Zip Drive

Ian Howie Zips away those storage blues with a revolutionary new peripheral.

Price: £149

100Mb Diskettes £15 each

Manufacturer: lomega

Contact: 0800 898 563

If your hard disk crashes you could be left with a system which is about as useful as the cones hotline. So the solution is to get a tape streamer right? Think again. Tape streamers are expensive, and inflexible (great for backing up, but try running Doom on one and you could be waiting until next Christmas). However a revolutionary alternative is now available. It's called a Zip drive and was a massive hit when it was launched in America recently.

This small blue drive is a cross between a floppy drive and a hard disk. With it you can back up your most important programs on 100Mb removable disks which are not much bigger than standard 1.44Mb floppies. And lomega's new drive is much more than just a cheap alternative to a tape streamer. The drive provides an effective way of moving information between machines, it's also a cheap way of expanding your hard disk's capacity and it's portable. The SCSI version of

this drive is even capable of transferring programs and data from PCs to Macs (or vice versa).

The Zip drive is very stylish, in fact it's a bit too good looking for most of the PC's it will have to sit next to. The drive is about the size and weight of a paperback book, making it easy to carry. However, it's not that portable because it lacks a battery.

Although you can manage a Zip disk in Windows or DOS, a full set of disk tools are provided. These allow you to copy, catalogue and find files. The tools also allow you to manage a diskette's write protection. Unlike conventional floppies, which use a tab, these disks are protected by software using a password system. A determined hacker could probably break the code, but it should deter any casual tampering.

I do have some reservations, though. The power lead plugs into the side of the Zip drive, restricting the number of places you can put the drive. lomega should also think again about the lack of a power switch, the only way to switch it off is to pull the plug! More serious is the drive's performance. The spec sheet claims the parallel port version of the drive can reach a transfer rate of 20Mb per minute. I found the

performance of my review drive to be between six and 15Mb per minute depending on the configuration I used. This is pretty tame when compared to a hard disk (300Mb per minute) and a CD-ROM drive (36Mb per minute).

Despite my criticisms, this drive has a lot to offer. It represents a cost effective way of increasing your storage requirements. Now every time you need more storage you can just go out and buy a few £15 diskettes instead of a £150 hard drive. The Zip drive is also excellent for porting programs between systems. Let's not forget that the drive is really useful for backing up your favourite software just in case the worst should happen. Given its low cost, its flexibility and

its portability the Zip drive deserves to have the same success here as it did in the United States. In fact you never know, one day it could become the new floppy disk standard.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Removable Storage

System requirements:

Parallel Port Version: any PC/SCSI version: PC (with a SCSI card) or MAC

Ease of use:

Installing is simple - hook it up and go.

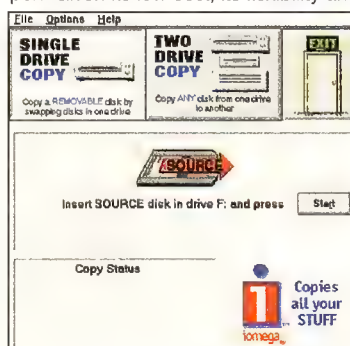
Performance:

Average, compared to a hard disk.

Value for money:

Excellent, allows you to back-up, increase your storage and share your files with other systems.

7



▲ Just plug and copy.

It's good to talk

Eat your heart out Bob Hoskins. PC Review Labs spent a fortune on the phone for this month's hardware round-up of fastest V.34 modems around.

The PC Review Labs Bench Tests

The need for speed is paramount in for Internet and comms use these days. So's the need for an affordable price. In real mercenary style we hit the 'phones and instructed Manufacturers to send us their V.34 modems, with fax capability and a maximum price of £300. V.34s are capable of transferring data at a nippy 28,800 bps (bits per second). The V prefix signifies that the modems comply with an industry standard, of which 34 is

currently the best and fastest. These modems are also fax compatible, able to send and receive faxes — as specified by the Group Two wording.

For the tests we devised something a little special. Using a normal BT line you can never be sure that the test conditions will be the same each time around. Instead a dedicated test environment was established using a telephone line simulator. This allowed us to not only

reproduce perfectly clear lines, but also generate interference, such as echoes, delays and noise.

The tests also checked for how much interference, otherwise known as line noise, the modem could tolerate. This was done by gradually increasing the amount of noise on the line in 1dB increments until the modem gave up. If you're interested we used a TAS Series II Telephone Network Emulator (thanks

for Phoenix Datacom on 01296 397711), PCs equipped with Hayes ESPs running Odyssey 2.0, passing various files across a range of m1025 worst case/standard case lines.

They were also cross-tested to see whether they would talk to each other at top speed as well as to models using their own chip-set. And to round everything off we also tested out their fax capabilities. Now that's thorough.

Pace Microlin FX34 Pocket



This is the only truly portable external modem on test here, it even comes with its own battery compartment so it's safe to use with laptops. Not that your average punter needs to go on the road with a modem, but it's an option, and one which also forces the Microlin to be very streamlined indeed. It's tiny, light, and (as opposed to the LASAT) a neutral colour. In performance the Pace and LASAT were neck and neck, without so much as a connection error between them, although if anything the Pace is just that bit more user friendly and has a lifetime warranty for good measure.

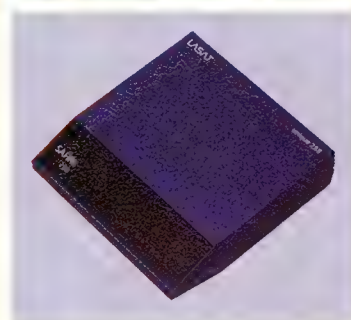
Manufacturer: Pace Micro

Contact: (01274) 532000

Price: £299

Score: 7

LASAT Safire 28.8



The LASAT has the distinction of being a funky blue-coloured wedge design, winning it the bizarre styling of the month award — it would be more at home in our Gadgets Column! Given this good start it's unfortunate that it doesn't manage to better the competition in price or performance, and loses brownie points for having lousy bundled software. Over all the Safire is a bit of a mixed bag, offering good performance results, but coping badly with increasing line noise. We can't help but feel that, even if it couldn't be faulted, it didn't stand out from the crowd either, apart from pure garishness.

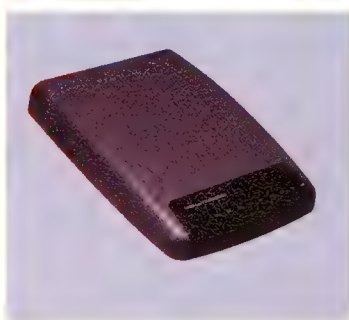
Manufacturer: LASAT

Contact: (0800) 136 331

Price: £290

Score: 7

Volante VossNet V.34 Fax/Modem



Last among the out-and-out speed merchants covered was the VossNet, which isn't even beginning to fight for the style award. It's also a disappointment on the installation front, with the software not as user-friendly as it could have been. That's a major problem which hampered it right from the outset. To make matters worse for itself, it posted lousy speed results on heavy noise lines, and only managed to pull itself out of the communications gutter by having good bundled software and selling for a decent price. Other than that, there isn't a whole lot to distance this from the rest of the field.

Manufacturer: VossNett

Contact: (01753) 737900

Price: £249

Score: 6

MultiTech 288ZDXK



The MultiTech is one of those indestructible pieces of equipment that you can throw around the room and it still keeps ticking. We know, because it made such a racket while connecting, we decided to manhandle it a little, and the noise still continued unabated. The 288ZDXK was a nice little performer, too, coming up with good results, a touch better than those of the LASAT. The software bundle isn't bad and the manual is well laid out. Take the noise away and turn a blind eye to the price, and this isn't a bad option. Not the best option either, of course, but then it's up against the Hayes and Electronic Frontier.

Manufacturer: MultiTech

Contact: (01344) 891266

Price: £299

Score: 7

MAKE	MODEL	PRICE	SPEED	FAX MODE LED	DIAL BACK SECURITY	EASE OF USE	VALUE	OVERALL
Electronic Frontier	XL288E	£160	8	N	Y	8	9	9
Hayes	Accura 28.8+ Fax	£249	9	N	N	8	8	9
LASAT	Safire 28.8	£299	7	N	N	7	7	7
MultiTech	288ZDXK	£299	8	Y	N	7	7	7
Pace	Microlin FX34 Pocket	£299	7	N	N	8	8	7
Volante	VossNet V.34 Fax/Modem	£179	6	N	Y	6	7	6

Hayes Accura 28.8 + Fax



In the USA Hayes is synonymous with modems. Its silver boxes are now available for a reasonable amount of money in the shape of the Accura range. The Accura is everything a modem should be: easy to use and install, without an overly complicated manual, and it was the fastest performance across the board of any of the tested machines. While it's here, the rest of the £200+ guys will be hard pressed to compete. The only reason it isn't a clear winner is that Electronic Frontier came along and upset the electronic apple-cart with a modem almost £100 cheaper that gives the Accura a damn good run for its money. Aside from

Manufacturer: Hayes

Contact: (01252) 775577

Price: £249

Score: 8

price, however, the Hayes modem is a superb piece of kit. In the PC Review lab tests it turned in impressively fast transfer speeds, especially for basic text where it outpaced every other model seen here, reaching a massive 7000 characters per second.

Electronic Frontier XL288E



The XL288E looks stylish, more like it should be sitting near a TV than a dull grey PC. On top of that it takes up hardly any space, and could be easily be carried around for mobile computing. More importantly it does its job without fuss or flap and at an incredibly low price compared to the other modems. You'll see your documents winging across the electronic ether double-quick time, with excellent performance come what may. Even sending and receiving compressed files across crackly international lines it came out smelling of roses. The most outstanding thing about the XL288E however is its price. This round-up is based on RRP where it wins hands down, but even using street pricing (the price that competitive dealers sell for) it comes out ahead. Without a doubt the one to go for.

Manufacturer: Frontier

Contact: (01734) 810600

Price: £160

Score: 9

PC Review Technical Editors' Award

Modems exist purely to transfer your data, so they must be fast. But with the masses of confusing standards, jargon and protocol that surrounds modems they must also be easy to use and install. Finally, a modem should come with a good set of basic software to get you started — without comms software you won't get very far on the digital highway. With superb performance and exemplary ease of use the Hayes Accura meets two of these requirements and hence comes in a close second, but its Electronic Frontier's XL288E with its blistering speed, wonderfully simple setup and comprehensive software that wins this month's PC Review Technical Editor's Award.

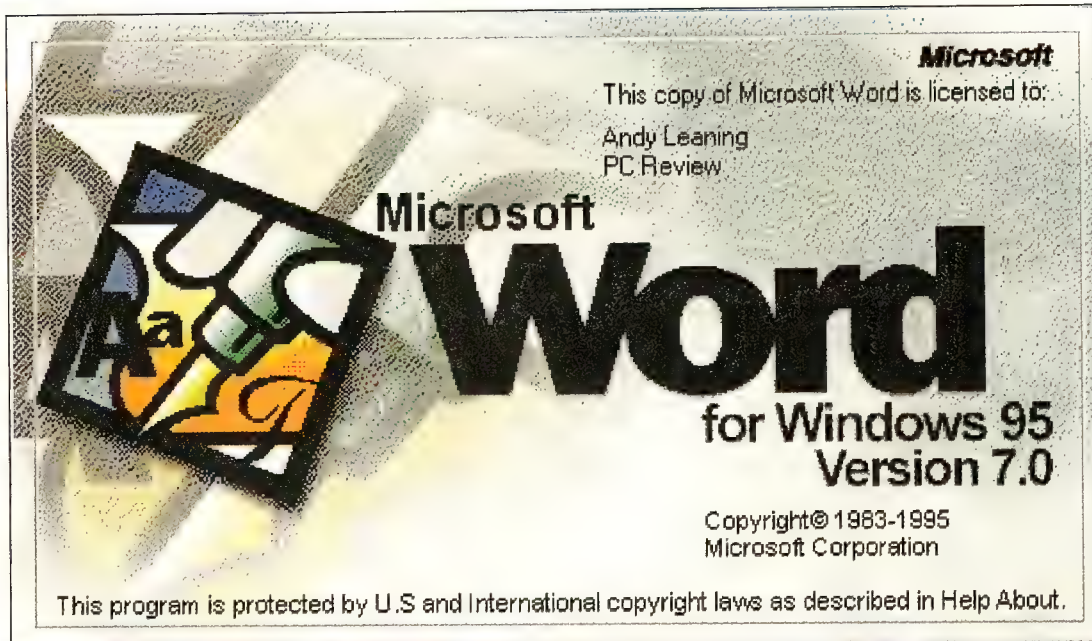
CD AND DISK

Price: £199 upgrade, £360 RRP

Supplier: Microsoft

Contact: 01345 002000

One of the best has just got better, but Andy Leaning finds out that if you want the power you've got to pay the price.



MS Office 95

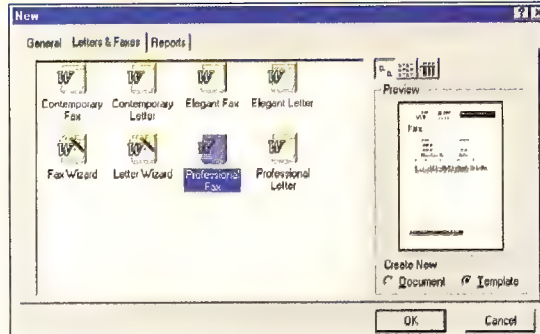
One of the less-known terms floating around in the PC world at the moment is SoHo – Small office/home office. Basically, it means anyone who uses spreadsheets or wordprocessors on their PC, and if that sounds like you, then this is one package you can't live without.

Office 95 is without doubt a monster of an application suite. The floppy version comes on 27 disks, while the CD version is overflowing with files. You get Windows 95 versions of the premiere word processor and spreadsheets, Word and Excel, a personal information organiser, Schedule+, and the brilliant presentation package PowerPoint. There's also features like the on-the-fly

spelling checker that points out mistakes as you make them, and an Answer Wizard which allows you to ask the program for help by typing in questions, rather than looking for a topic in a list of help subjects.

Not only that, but OLE2 – the system that allows you to take data from one type of application such as a spreadsheet, and then enter and edit it within another application such as a wordprocessor — has much easier to use. This is because most Office 95 applications have been tidied up to look like each other. So there is now less confusion when menus change as you switch between the different types of data. For instance, dragging illustrations from PowerPoint into Excel, and Excel

Sneak preview time, when creating a new document you can get a quick preview of templates if you want. Also see how templates are held in groups according to their type.



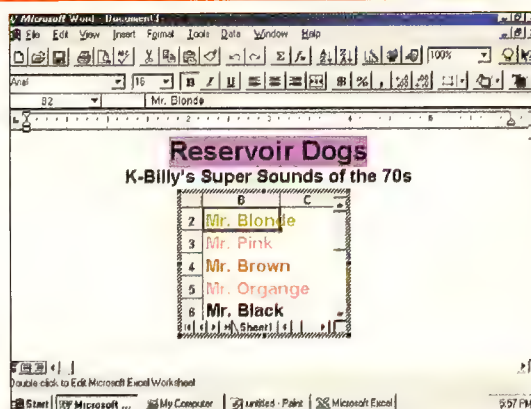
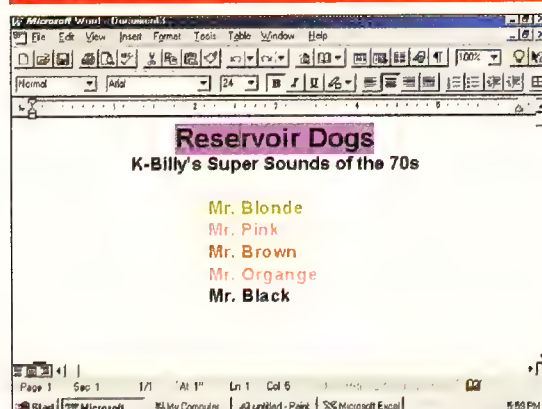
spreadsheets into

Word is straightforward as the only difference between the Word and Excel menus is the Table menu. The compatibility is further enhanced with the binder system which lets you combine work from all the different applications in one

document. As well as these feature improvements there are also many changes beneath the surface that aren't visible but make the programs faster. The different applications share much of their internal code, this means that when loading Excel after Word has been started Windows only needs to load bits it doesn't already have in memory — resulting in faster loading times. The same dictionaries are also used between the programs, cutting down on the disk space used.

The word!

The changes to the individual programs are less dramatic. Word's as familiar as ever with the key difference being the speedier text-formatting system. AutoCorrect has also been expanded and improved, words without vowels are no longer capitalised. It also allows various styles of layout to be easily created. For instance, entering a number followed by a space and text will create a numbered list — no messing around



▲ **Whiter than White washes.** Before and after OLE usage. On the left is a document in Word while I'm editing the normal text. The screen shot on the right shows how the menus and tool bars change when I double click to edit the spreadsheet object (from Excel) live in Word. Notice how the tool bar changes, but in the menu only the 'Table' menu changes.

Regrets, I've got a few...

Until Novell and Corel get their office suites out there's nothing to really touch Office 95 for users of Windows 95. So how come it's only got a PC Review score of eight out of ten, and not a coveted award? Put simply Office 95 Standard Edition (seen here) is missing several important elements, for both business and home users. Most significantly is a database. True you could use the database facilities of Excel or the name and address book in Schedule+, but these aren't full databases. As an application suite for offices it sorely needs a database, more than a presentation package or personal organiser. Why Microsoft

chose to drop its database, Access, from Office (it was in previous versions) and replace it with Schedule+ we'll probably never know, but without it it's not complete as an office applications suite.

Another missing element, but not so important, is some form of graphics program. Not vital to business users, it would none the less have been a useful addition. Given the importance of graphics to DTP and presentation programs, which Office with Word and PowerPoint provides, a drawing or painting program ought to be included. As a final note, it's worth pointing out that the Professional Edition of Office 95 has a, Access in it.

with the formatting menu here. Likewise simple graphics effects can also be easily produced without having to use the drawing tools — typing in three equals signs in a row will automatically produce a line across the page. Don't get the wrong idea, though, while they don't sound exciting these changes really do make life easier — once you've experienced typing in Word 7 with its clever AutoCorrection, you'll loathe using Word 6.

On the other hand Excel has been dramatically improved. For starters it's been rewritten from scratch to make it much, much faster. Recalculation times are way up on previous versions, and with the extra speed available new facilities have been added to allow common operations to be performed with minimum effort. For example, when you

create a column (list) of names, Excel automatically figures out what you'll want to enter in the next cell based on the previous entries. Other tricks include the ability to carry out one of five common calculations automatically on a collection of cells just by highlighting the cells and clicking on the function name. There are lots of other goodies as well as those; cells with cell-notes are now shown with a little red dot in the corner of the cell, while column and row insertions are graphically displayed. Like Word too, Excel also has the AutoCorrect facility, and uses the same dictionary saving both disk space and dictionary maintenance time — no need to add words to two dictionaries.

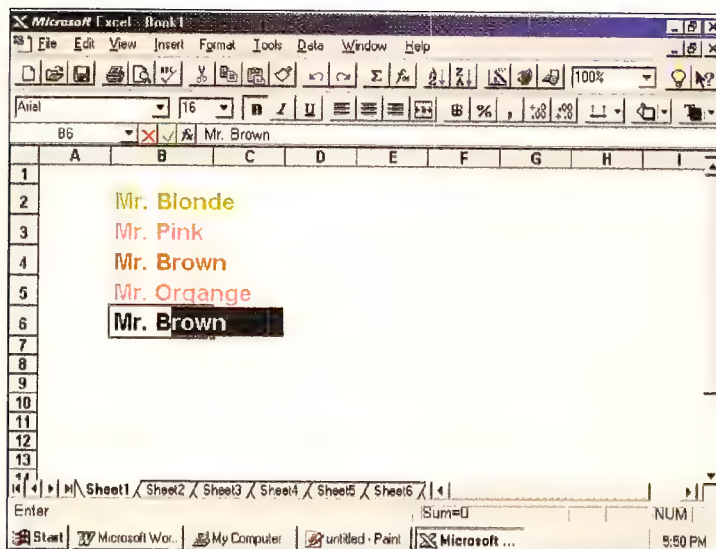
PowerPoint 7 also has a few new tricks, such as animation and the ability to add notes to a presentation during its display and the option to show a mono version of a slide so changes can be made to compensate for black and white printers. Then there are other aids to make life in PowerPoint easier. Inserting a new slide in a presentation brings up a dialog box prompting you for a default slide format to use as a new

template (making creation easier) along with a timer so you can accurately judge how long a presentation will last. Schedule+ is now a fully functioning PIM: with meeting managers, address books even the ability to import from Sharp IQ calculators (via a serial link) or program the Timex data watch. You can also transfer data from the name and address book in Schedule+ to a Word file for quick letters and the like.

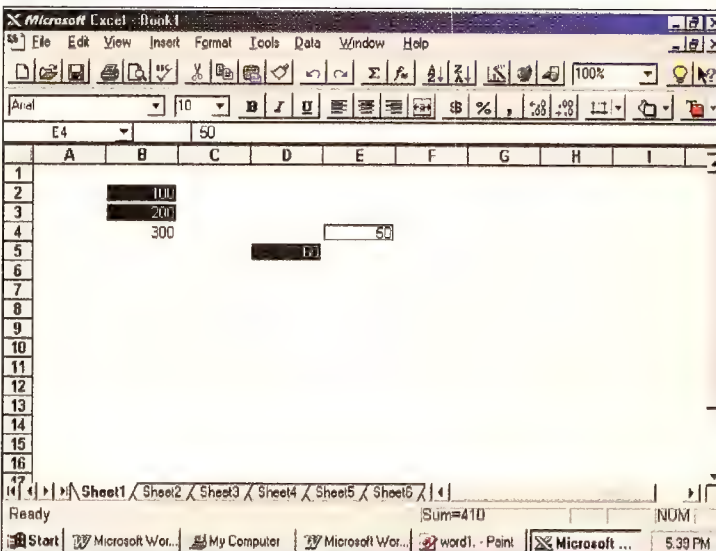
It's a knockout!

Now the bit you're waiting for. The final conclusion. Well, the down side of all these wonderful features is that a lot of people will have to upgrade their machines if they want to use them. On a 486DX 33MHz with 8Mb RAM it often took several seconds for a menu to drop down, while the Open and Save dialogs took up to three seconds to appear. But the extra features are worth the wait. The time the program saves by correcting mistakes as they're entered rather than the user changing them later makes up for much of the time spent waiting for it.

In conclusion Microsoft Office 95 is classic piece of software, taking something everyone thought was great and expanding it further without losing anything in the process. It's now easier to use, more powerful and functional where it counts. The only problem being as mentioned earlier that owners of slower systems will doubtless need new hardware. Until Novell and Corel ship their version of Win 95 application suites Office 95 is simply the best of its type, a knockout product. If only it had a database rather than a personal organiser...

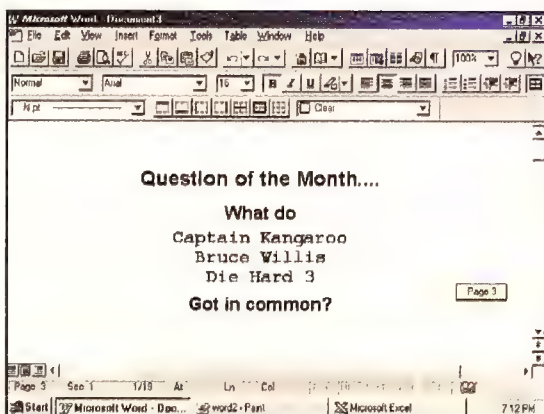


▲ **Easy does it!** If you've got a list of words and start typing in the next cell Excel looks at the previous entries and makes a very intelligent guess as to what you're going to type next and expands it for you. Here it thought I'd want to type 'Mr. Blond' because it found a previous cell matching the 'Mr. B' I'd typed in.



▲ **Click on any group of cells and Excel will automatically work out one of five possible calculations, in this case using SUM, the answer can be seen at the bottom of the window.**

Dead Sea Scrolls. Well it doesn't any more, but Word 7 does, and as you scroll through a document the pages that the scroll bar moves over are shown in a box next to the slider. ▼



PCR VERDICT

Category:

Application Suite

System requirements:

Any PC running Windows 95

Ease of use:

Not simple to use, but a joy once you get used to it.

Performance:

Good, but most people will end up upgrading their hardware for it.

Value for money:

Reasonable, but not outstanding. Would be nice to have a database, and some form of graphics program to create pictures for PowerPoint and Word with.

8

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Professional CV Writer for Windows

We think Charles Hathaway is looking for a job. This program might help him.

Putting together a decent curriculum vitae or CV has always been a tricky task, so when the time comes you will probably need as much help as you can get. This program guides you step-by-step to the perfect CV, using a wide range of examples and other tricks to put you in a creative frame of mind. Also included are various covering letters, some TrueType fonts, a 100,000 word spell checker (American unfortunately) and even a list of suitably

Price: £14.99

Manufacturer: VCI Software

Contact: (01923) 255553

CD ONLY

The ideas section is handy too giving you ideas for your CV. ▶

dynamic sounding words!

CV Writer comes on a CD that has to be kept in the drive as a form of copy protection. There's also a thin seven page manual that covers the basics of designing a CV, including some advice on whether to go for the chronological or the functional approach or a mixture of the two.

The first stage is to create a rough, using the drag and drop layout to build up the sections in the order you want them. The sections cover name and address, experience and qualifications as

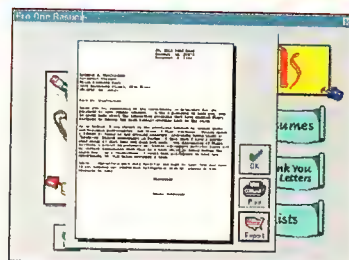
◀ **It's easy, just fill in the blanks for a ready-made CV.**

well as less common ones such as hobbies, military service and so on. Each section can then be filled in using the custom dialogue box. The text is automatically formatted for you and you can preview the CV on screen at any time.

Once you've entered the facts and figures, you can alter the formatting of each or all of the sections as you see fit. You are given a fair degree of control over the typeface and appearance of the CV, but not quite enough to make individual lines really stand out.

An export option would be useful for fine-tuning, but on the whole the printed output is very good indeed.

The previews are frustratingly slow and the cut and paste facilities could be better. On balance though, CV Writer is an excellent program. I'll certainly give it the job of doing my CV — when the time comes of course...



PCR VERDICT

Category:

Application

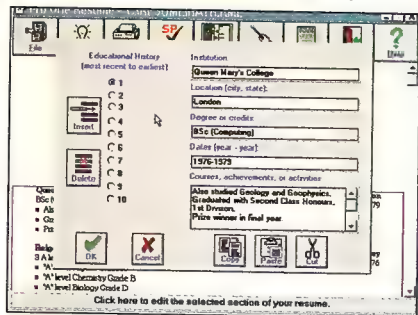
System requirements:

CD-ROM running Windows

Value for money:

Remarkable — every job hunter should have one.

7



Gamestar

Price: £39.99

Manufacturer: Euromax

Contact: (01262) 601006

Able to turn his hand to anything (to quote one High Court Judge), Jim Gillies was just the man to try out yet another joystick.

GameStar buttons can be programmed buttons to simulate keyboard key presses. But it needs this interface to work. ▼

The problem with joysticks is that for a great many games there just aren't enough buttons. A typical beat 'em up has loads of moves that a two button 'stick just can't handle. Then there are games that have so many moves they need a keyboard to work. What's needed is some kind of joystick that has a lot of buttons and can take over from the keyboard, and this is precisely

what the GameStar sets out to do.

The joystick is the same basic six button layout, but the buttons are perhaps a little bit too close together and the index-finger cut-outs in the underside seem to have been based on ergonomic data taken from the Roswell autopsy.

The Gamestar works by proving a limited, but definable keyboard (in the shape of a joystick, of course). The pad itself plugs into an adaptor into which the keyboard is plugged. A lead from the adaptor then goes to the normal keyboard port at the back of your PC. It has a separate socket to allow your keyboard to remain connected and plugging it all in takes about two minutes.

There are two ways to program the joystick. You can run the Gamestar program which displays a keyboard and the joystick. Just click on the joystick key and then the keyboard press it should mimic.

It's from here that you can save your configurations. To program

the pad in-game, just press "Set" on the adaptor and then it's "joypad press, keyboard; joypad, keyboard" until you're happy. The main problems with configuring in-game is that it can get a little confusing as to whether you're using keyboard or joypad and if you need more than six keys you can forget about it. Using a mixture of keyboard and joypad is impossible since the adapter acts as a switching box, so only one can be connected at a time.

Gamestar comes with a pre-set Doom configuration, but unless you're a pre-frontal lobotomy type then I wouldn't recommend it. It was pretty decent with shoot 'em ups and needless to say it's a lot better than the keyboard for beat 'em ups. The best thing about this kind of approach is that it allows you to use a joystick on games that either don't allow it at all, or get a bit shirty when you do.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Programmable joypad

System requirements:

DOS 2 and above

Value for money:

Nothing very special, but it might come in handy for the odd game.

5



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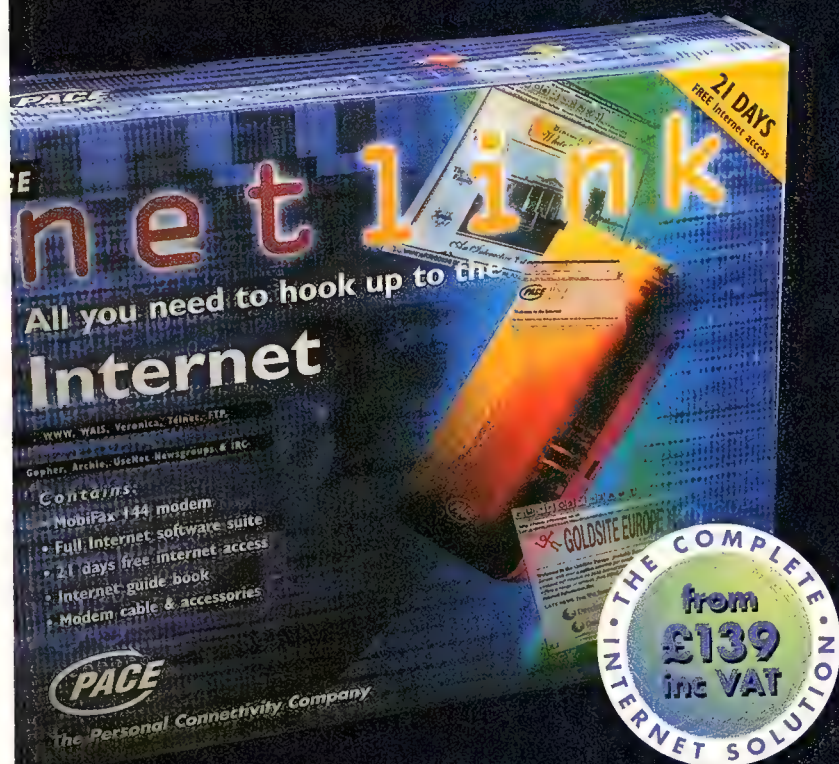
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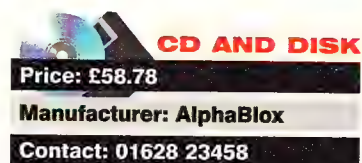
* includes

OfficeBlox

If anybody needed their life organising, it's Pat Fox. So we gave him OfficeBlox.

OfficeBlox is a suite of mini-programs that are designed to work as an integrated desktop environment and help to simplify operations involving multiple applications. First up is Toolbox, which acts rather like the toolbar of Microsoft Office; you can assign buttons on the bar which will launch frequently-used applications, or even documents, simply by dragging and dropping their icon over the bar.

The rest of the applications are small utilities for performing simple functions: CalcBox — a calculator and simple spreadsheet; NoteBlox — a notepad; and ListBlox, a sort of simplified database-cum-spreadsheet. What makes them particularly useful, however, is their OLE support — it is possible to link



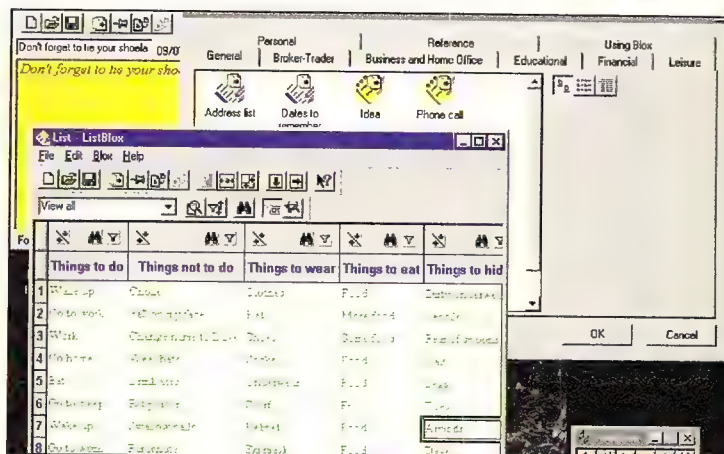
Price: £58.78

Manufacturer: AlphaBlox

Contact: 01628 23458

or embed components of each utility into the other, and also into documents from other OLE-compatible applications. Put simply, this means that you might, for example, put a spreadsheet from CalcBox into a ListBlox list, or include a note from NoteBlox in a Word for Windows document, in order to remind yourself of something.

Each of the components works well, and the integration is practically seamless. With a whole series of integrated packages promised for the future, this suite is worthwhile for someone who



▲ Keep track of your life with OfficeBlox's suite of handy utilities. The ListBlox allows you to keep tabs on all those important reminders.

makes intensive use of several different types of application, since it provides a common set of tools for use in a variety of applications. The only question is whether you really need another calculator, another notepad and another way of launching applications when all these are already present, in some form, within Windows 95 itself.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Win 95 utility suite

System requirements:

Any PC running Windows 95

Value for money:

Good, but most of its utilities are already part of Windows 95.

7

SmartPad

Pat Fox investigates a small — but perfectly formed — utility with very big ideas.



CD AND DISK

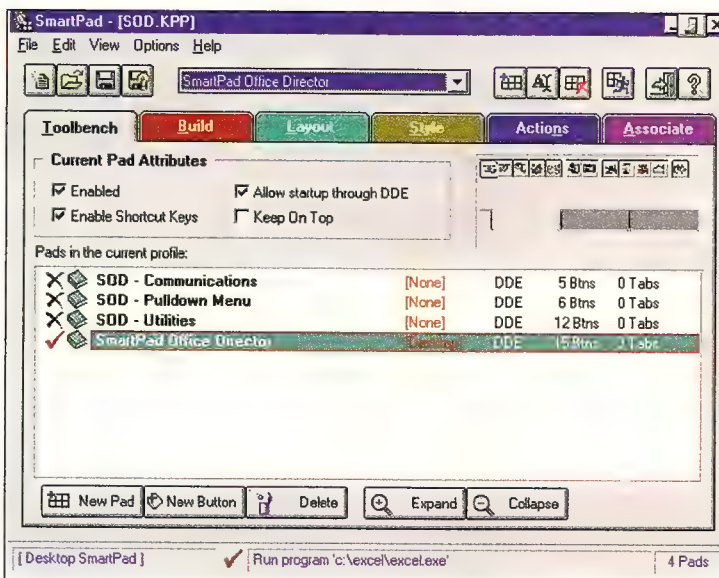
Price: £TBA

Manufacturer: Softblox

Contact: (001) 404 892 0202

These days, most Windows packages rely heavily on "button bars" to simplify many of their operations; by removing the need to access numerous menus — or worse, memorise multiple key combinations — life for the average user is now easier and more productive. So what do you do if your favourite application doesn't permit you to make use of this sort of button bar? Have no fear, SmartPad comes to the rescue.

SmartPad, at its most basic level, is a utility for designing your own button bars, whether you want to create a Microsoft Office-style control panel for launching frequently-used applications, or design a personalised bar of your most used program commands. For example, in the latter case, you might



▲ The SmartPad editor allows you to create detailed button bars with the minimum of fuss — even generic toolbars that can be used across several different applications.

wish to group together tools such as Cut, Copy and Paste in a particular way; you can also use the same bar in different programs, thus ensuring standardisation across applications.

In addition to being able to launch applications, or assign menu commands to a button, SmartPad also allows you to create a button that will execute a series of predefined key-presses — a useful way to simplify tasks that might require multiple menu commands, without having to define a macro menu command.

There is a whole lot more to SmartPad than could ever be covered here. It is potentially a very powerful tool and an aid to productivity. However, with the increasing configurability of modern Windows applications, and the advent of the simplified Windows '95 interface, I can't help wondering whether the day-to-day user really has need of such power.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Windows utility suite

System requirements:

Any PC running Windows 95

Value for money:

A good tool for increasing productivity in applications.

7

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STYLE Writer

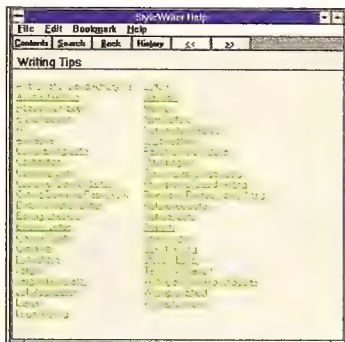
John Kennedy re-lives a crush on his English Teacher as he flirts with a utility to improve writing skills.

Price: £150

Supplier: Editor Software

Contact: 01453 548409

While word processors ensure that we don't have any excuses for misspelling, style is something else and this is what StyleWriter attempts to improve. It's not a word processor replacement, but rather a utility that runs in the background. If your word processor supports the Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE) standard, such as Microsoft Word or AmiPro, then a menu option will invoke the style check. If DDE is not available, then it will analyse text placed in the clipboard.



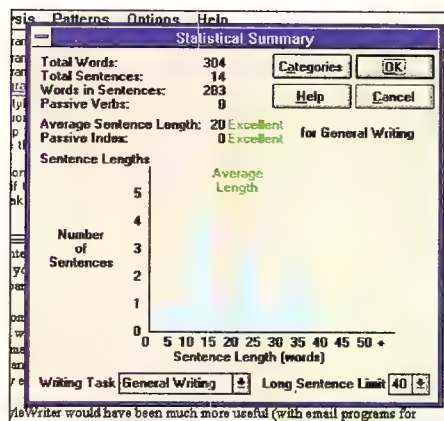
▲ **Comprehensive on-line help facilities: although useful, they aren't as attractive as my English Teacher, Miss Erwin.**

StyleWriter looks for long sentences, passive verbs and a long list of other possible problems. You can fine-tune it to the style of writing you are working

on (legal, academic, general and so on) and then watch your prose heartlessly torn apart in front of your eyes.

If you already own Word or some other WP with grammar checking, it will be hard to justify the expense of StyleWriter. Word will pick up many of the same faults (and some others too) and will offer suggestions and let you make changes easily, but one thing StyleWriter does have is excellent help facilities. If you really want to know what a "passive verb" actually is and why you shouldn't use one, then look here.

As a stand alone program, StyleWriter would have been much more useful (with e-mail programs for example) if there was an option to install a full spelling checker, rather than a list of 2000 common mistakes. It's still an interesting program though.



▲ **Follow the rules, and you end up with a lovely little graph**

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Utility

System requirements:

Any Windows PC

Value for money:

If you have Word, think hard: otherwise consider this strongly.

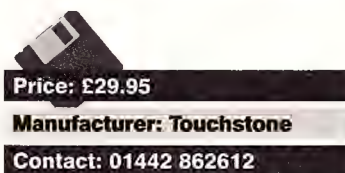
7

Win '95 Advisor

Charles Hathaway discovers an even more expensive way to upgrade to Windows 95...

Win '95 Advisor is a somewhat curious program — its sole purpose in life is to help you install Windows 95 — find problems, report prospective Windows 95 performance on your system and generally help with the installation.

After running the main program which uses Touchstone's neat little information hunting utility to collect as much detail



Price: £29.95

Manufacturer: Touchstone

Contact: 01442 862612

about your system as it can, (from the date of the BIOS to the number of hard drives) you're then given a rating. If you're likely to run into problems with

the performance of Windows 95, it'll be highlighted here.

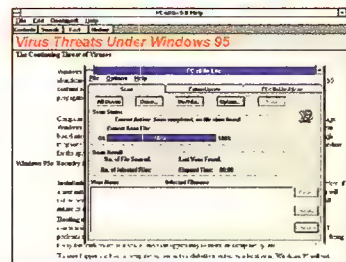
▲ **The benchmark utility gives your system a Windows 95 suitability rating. Just in case you can't read the minimum requirements.**

But so what? You've probably got a pretty good idea already what your PC can do — do you really need another program to tell you?

If you've got incompatible hardware you get no help either — all the program offers is to let you read through a long text file where most of the contacts turn out to be US. Other elements of the program include a planning checklist, an installation tutorial, some facts and figures on disk space and a multimedia benchmark to tell you how much faster Windows 95 is once you get it installed.

You also get a virus checker called PC-cillin, a very useful compression program and a text editor to let you remove existing device drivers from your system files. But what's the point if it can't tell you which files to back up or remove?

Win '95 Advisor looks like a poor attempt to cash in on the worries of thousands of prospective upgraders. In short, it's little more than a souped-up read me file with knobs on.



▲ **Win 95 Advisor may not be good for much, but at least you get a free virus checker.**

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Utility

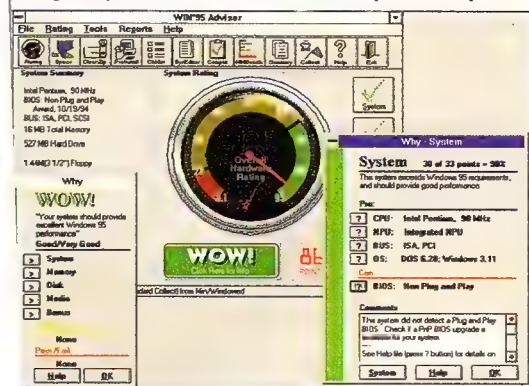
System requirements:

Any PC running Windows

Value for money:

For 99% of upgraders it's pointless, subscribe to PC Review instead.

3



CorelDRAW 6

It's been a long time but it was worth the wait. David Bradwell tries out the huge new version of Corel Draw.

CD ONLY
Publisher: Corel
Price: £495, upgrade £199/£299
Contact: (0800) 581028

Graphic artists beware! CorelDRAW 6 is far more than just a drawing program. It's actually a suite of applications and utilities that all work together to offer virtually unlimited design possibilities. Whether you just want to pep up a poster with a bit of clip art or you want to produce complex 3D graphics and animations, the latest version could well be for you.

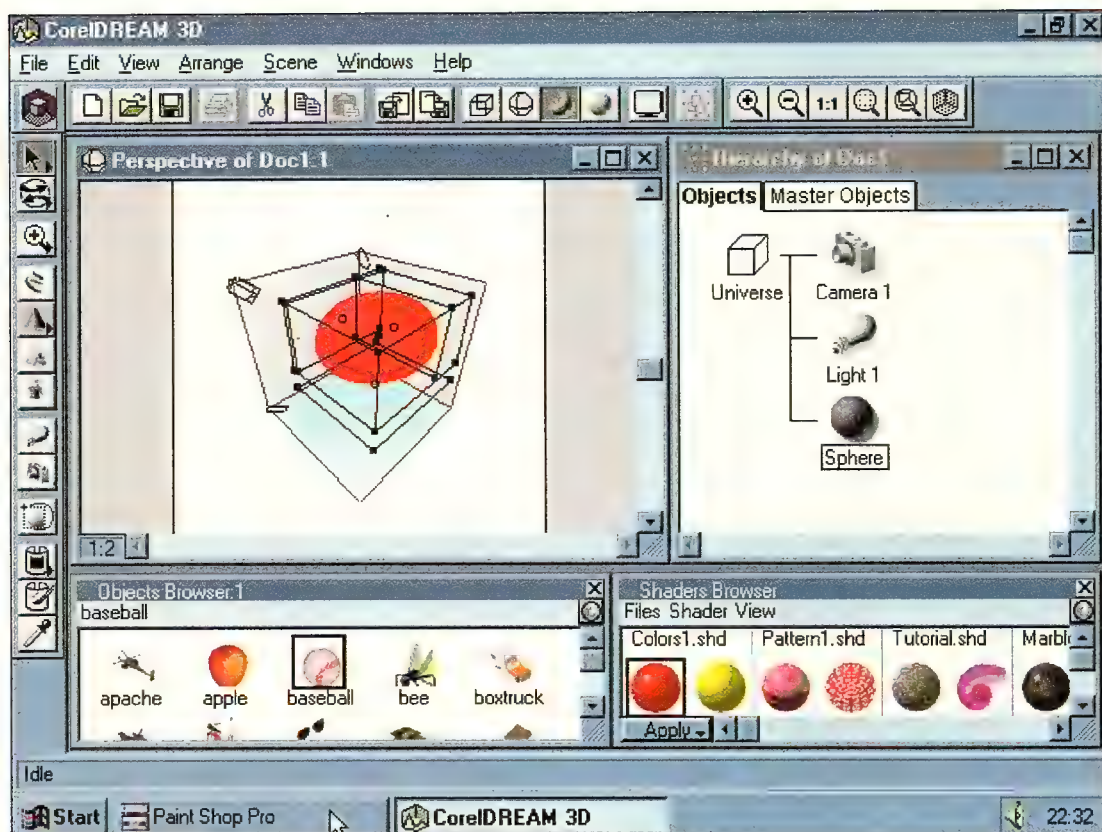
The desktop publishing program Ventura has been dropped from this release so Corel can develop CorelDRAW 6 as a standalone application. In its place there's a new version of the image editor Photo-Paint, a new 3D modelling program called Dream 3D, Motion 3D for 3D text and logo animation, and Presents — a multimedia presentation graphics program. While there are more powerful 3D products on the market, with CorelDRAW 6 this is the first time so much has been bundled together into one comparatively affordable package.

Useful utilities

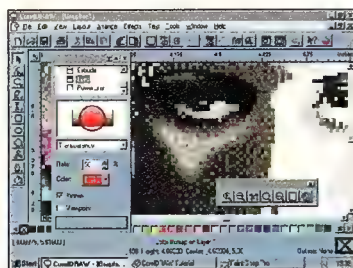
There's also a batch of rather nifty utilities contained in the new version, including a multimedia resource manager, a font controller, and an instant 3D effects generator for text and graphics. Getting your head round the creative potential of all the different components is tough enough — and that's before you have to learn how to use them.

Historically CorelDRAW has always been lauded for being rich in features, but then criticised for being difficult to work with. The new version is a lot more approachable. There's a consistent interface between all the different applications, and far more on-line assistance.

As the suite is a collection of 32-bit applications, you'll need to be running Windows 95 to install it, although a version for IBM's OS/2 Warp operating system is also on the cards. You'll also need a fairly high spec machine. A full installation requires a staggering 180Mb of

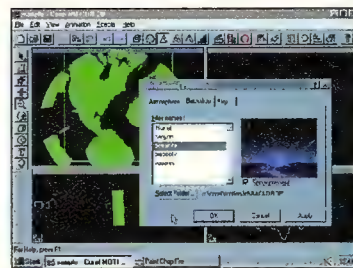


▲ **It's a drag act! Corel Dream 3D makes full use of icons, with drag & drop to make 3D modelling very easy. Just pick the shapes you want and drag them into position!**



▲ **The Lens roll-up is just one of many floating menus that let you access the most powerful features of the program.**

hard disk space, although if space is tight you can choose to omit certain applications or run the program directly from the, wait for it, four CDs! Ideally you should also have a Pentium processor in your machine and lots of memory — especially for the 3D components. I did try to run it on the minimum recommended system and at times it was



▲ **Corel Motion 3D allows video with 3D effects to be created, now you can add your own tacky intros to wedding videos...**

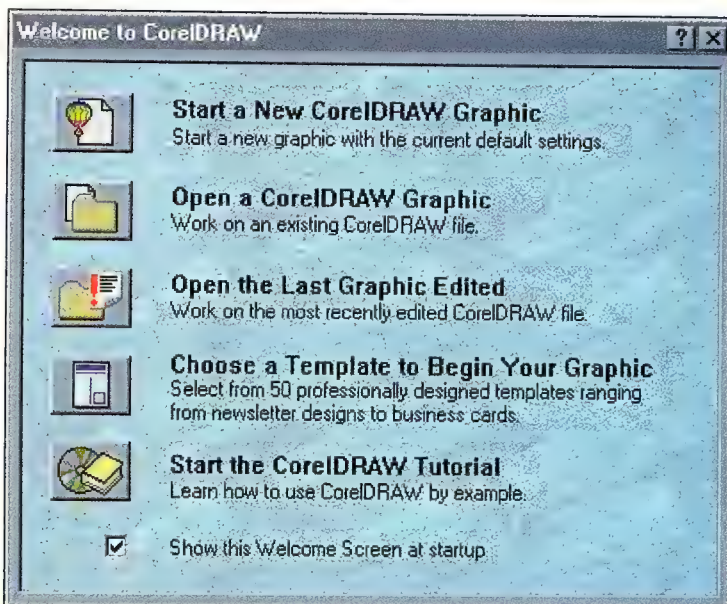
painfully slow.

To fully do justice to every part of the CorelDRAW suite I'd need to take over the entire magazine. But, as space is tight, I've concentrated on the three main elements: CorelDRAW itself, and two of its main components Dream 3D, and Motion 3D. Of the other bundled applications, Photo-Paint and Presents

are the most significant, being an extremely capable image editor and multimedia presentation graphics package respectively.

The main application, CorelDRAW 6, has a new interface and lots of significant improvements. It's easier to use than previous versions, and the on-line help is much better. This comes in the form of Wizards (which lead you step-by-step through common tasks), tutor notes, and right mouse button support. New users can work through the comprehensive on-line tutorial which introduces the basic features and techniques required to get the most out of the software.

Other improvements include a multiple document interface, so you can have more than one image open at a time, and there's precision down to one micron, should you need it. As well as all of the usual drawing tools, CorelDRAW



▲ The new welcome screen makes it a lot easier to get started with CorelDRAW 6.

6 also comes with all sorts of special effects, accessed through floating menus. You can tint objects, extrude their edges, make an object partially transparent, apply effects to text and a whole lot more besides. As you can imagine, it takes a while to discover what all these roll-ups do, but if you want to get the most out of the program it will be time well spent. It's incredibly powerful once mastered!

It's a modeller's dream

Dream 3D is a 3D modelling and rendering application that helps you create 3D illustrations with pre-defined models and surface textures. It's based on RayDream Designer, an old Windows and Mac 3D application and adopts a simple drag and drop approach. You can create your own models or import and adapt those supplied with the program. You can then adjust the viewing angle, shading, surface texture and colour until you get the effect you want.

Motion 3D lets you create a virtual world and then move objects around within it. The resulting animation can be saved as an AVI video file, which can then be viewed as a stand-alone movie or imported into multimedia presentations and applications (take a look at this month's Video feature for other AVI video creation and editing packages). You can create text objects within the program or import 3D models and graphics from elsewhere. You can then apply surface textures, lights, and movement, and change the camera viewpoint and experiment until it all works well together. Be warned though, that it can take a long time to render a 3D scene. Thankfully you can use wireframe previews when you're putting your movie together, and then only hit the render

button when you're finished. Even for a short movie there'll be plenty of time for a refreshing cup of tea!

And finally . . .

As well as the applications and utilities mentioned above, CorelDRAW comes with 25,000 bits of clipart, hundreds of photographs, 3D models and video clips, which explains why it comes on four CDs! With this lot you certainly can't complain about value for money, even at this price and there's no excuse for ever running short of inspiration. You may need to take a week off work to get to grips with the monster, but when you do, you'll find it the most awesome and powerful graphics package ever released.



PCR VERDICT

Category:

Graphics software

System requirements:

486DX2-66 with 8Mb RAM

Ease of use:

It can be difficult going, but it's still easier than the previous version.

Performance:

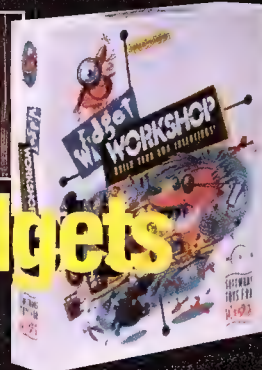
Impressive, although it needs lots of hardware.

Value for money:

With over 25,000 clipart images, 1,000 fonts, 1,000 photographs, 750 3D models, 260 video clips, plus 1,500 actors, props and sounds — it's a bargain.



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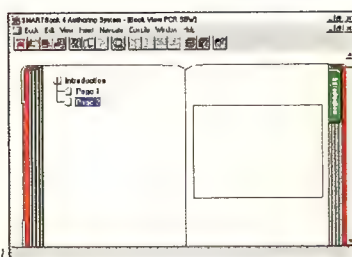
SMARTBook 4 Tutorial

In the last issue of PC Review we gave away the rather brilliant SMARTBook 4. This month Ian Howie shows how to use some of SMARTBook 4's powerful buttons to create interactive productions and more.

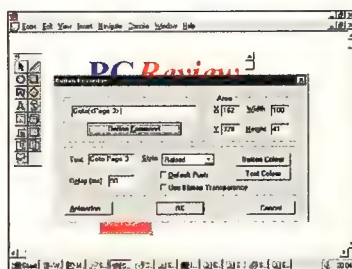
part one

SMARTBook is a multimedia package that allows you to mix photographs, drawings, and text to produce your own interactive books, magazines and presentations. Free with PCR October.

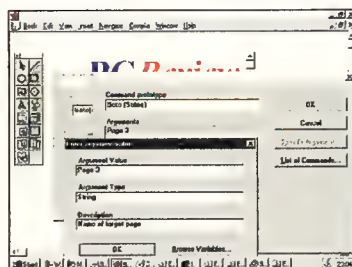
1 This month we'll be exploring the button tool in order to create some navigation controls within a book. Plus we'll also be devising a simple slide show for you to create. First create a book with at least three pages as explained in issue 48 page 12. Now go to page one and add some text with the 'A' icon.



2 Next we're going to add a button which will take a reader to page three. In the toolbar is a small icon with a finger pressing on a button. Select this icon and then click where you want the button on the page. To change the button's properties, click on the one you've just created and a properties dialog will appear. Type 'Goto Page 3' in the text box to change the button's name. Now click on Style box and select one of the options. To alter the button's colour click on the colour button and select a colour from the pallet, I've chosen red. Selecting the colour for the text is similar just click on the text colour button and again select from the panel, I went for white.

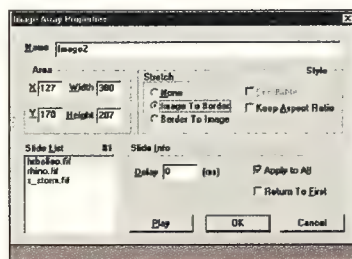


3 Next we'll turn this button into a navigation tool. Click on the Define Command button near to the top of the box. This brings up a Commands Dialog. Select the Goto command. An Arguments Dialog will be displayed. Press the Specify Arguments button. In the Argument Value box dialog type Page 3.



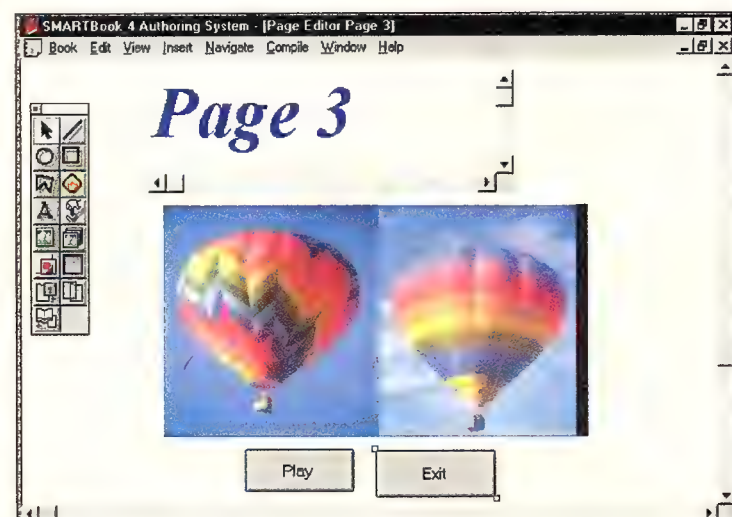
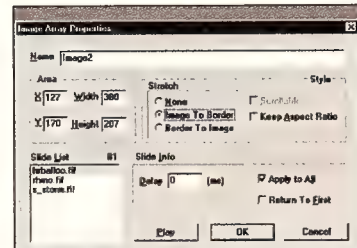
Now click OK on every dialog which has been opened. You have now created a button which will take your readers from page one to page three in one click.

4 Now click on the last icon on the Toolbox and click on 'page 3' in the contents list. On this page we are going to create an exit button. First create a button, entering Exit in the text box, and then press the Define Command Button. From the list of commands select exit and click OK on both the dialog windows.



To test what we've done so far, click on the compile and preview menu. Once compiled click on the two buttons to see if they work.

5 Let's now create a slide show on page three. Go to this page and click on the image array button on the tool bar (it's the one with cascading windows). The Modify Image Array dialog will appear. SMARTbook 4 comes with several still pictures contained in the images directory. Just click on the name of an image and then press the add key to attach one to your side show. Once you've finished adding images press the OK button.



6 A play button is required to start the slide show. Create a button and type Play in the text box. From the Commands Dialog click on PlayImageArray. In the Arguments Dialog press the Specify Arguments button and in the Arguments Values box enter Image. Now select OK on all the dialog window. Finally compile and save the book. You can now run the book using the reader program.

Upgrade Now!

Version 1.1 of SMARTbook has:

- Support for AVI video files
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- More backgrounds
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SMARTBook 4 Version 1.1 has a RRP of £316, but as an exclusive offer to PC Review readers, it's £216, from Frax Ltd on (01224) 621144.

Get SMART

If you missed the October issue with SMARTBook on our cover CD-ROM then don't worry. You can still get a copy, just call our back issues department on (01858) 468888. This issue also features an in-depth feature on Artificial Intelligence, a monitor round up, plus news, reviews and a free 52-page games supplement.

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AC26 TT - time lock, ideal for solicitors & accounts (1)
AC69 EXPRESS GRAPH - v. good program (1)
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AC82 BUSINESS ANALYSIS - 3 programs that will help make better decisions (1)
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MUSIC

- M01 BLASTERMASTER - play edit soundblaster (1)
M02 TRACKBLASTER - excellent for .MOD files (1)
M03 DRUMBLASTER - make computerised drum machine (1)
M04 GUITAR TEACHER - excellent program (1)
M05 SUPER PRO PLAY - play Amiga .MOD files on PC (1)
M06 PIANOMAN - highly recommended (1)
M07 THE SOUNDBLASTER (1)
M08 MELODY MASTER (1)
M09 MUSICIANS TOOL BOX - wicked program! (1)
M10 ADLROLI - 105 adlib ROL sound files, use with a player (1)
M11 BEATMDI - midi; a collection of Beatles songs (1)
M12 BPT05 - pro MOD editor & player for EGA/VGA (1)
M13 CDBOX v2.10 - excellent MOD, ROL, CMF & VOC player for SBI (1)
M14 CDP v1.20 - play music CDs with your CD-ROM drive (1)
M15 COMPOS v1.2 - 8-channel VGA digital soundblaster composer (1)
M16 INTUNE v2.5 - ROL player w/menu for soundblaster/AdLib (1)
M17 MELOD - excellent PC speaker music creation program (1)
M18 MODED v2.00 - music sequencer to create your own .MOD file (1)

EDUCATION

- ED22 SCHOOL MUM V4.1 - comprehensive education program (1)
ED23 FUNNY FACE II - fun program for children (1)
ED24 HANGMAN - classic program for all ages, v. good (1)
ED25 TYPE TREK - good typing program (1)
ED26 COMPUTER TRIVIA QUIZ - for all ages! (1)
ED27 MUMS MATHS v4.0 - excellent learning program (1)
ED28 WORD GALLERY v3.0 - colourful word & object program (1)
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ED36 KAL - program entertaining Mathematics game (1)
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ED38 X WORD WRITE - good crossword compiler (1)
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ED41 C BOX - maths for age groups 7-10 (1)
ED42 PLAY AND LEARN - many different games for 4-8 yr olds (1)
ED43 COMPILATION OF CHILDRENS EDUC. GAMES - recommended (3)
ED44 TUTOR DOS - teach yourself all you need to know about DOS! (4)
ED45 GCSE: MATHS, COMPUTER STUDIES, SCIENCE & PHYSICS (4)
ED46 I.Q. BUILDER - test your skills! (1)
ED47 PC FAST TYPE - program to test how many WPM you can do (1)
ED48 LOTUS 123 TUTOR - in conjunction with Lotus many features (2)
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ED98 ANIMATED MEMORY - 30 animated shapes to test memory skills (1)
ED99 CREATIVITY PACKAGE v2.2 - many different games to help you! (1)
ED100 COMPUTITCH - design and print cross stitch patterns (1)

GAMES

- G01 DRACULA - a Count Dracula arcade game (1)
G02 WOLFENSTEIN 3D (1) 5.25" - only on HD
G03 COSMOS'S COSMIC ADVENTURE (1)
G04 POWER CHESS (1)
G05 DUKE NUKEM (1)
G06 KUNG FU LOUIS (3)
G07 FLIGHT PRO-SIMULATOR (5)
G08 CREATE CROSSWORD (1)
G09 COMMANDER KEEN III (1)

- G10 CAPTAIN COMIC V5 (1)
G11 PC GOLF (1)
G12 CRYSTAL CAVES (1)
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G14 SHOOTING GALLERY (1)
G15 ALIENS ATE MY BABYSITTER (1)
G16 CROSSWORD CREATOR (1)
G17 PHARAOH'S TOMB (1)
G18 PAGANITZU (1)
G19 SECRET AGENT (1)
G20 VAMPYR (2)
G21 JUMPMAN (1)
G22 WHEEL OF FORTUNE (1)
G23 CASINO GAMES COLLECTION (1)
G24 JUNGLE JACK (1)
G25 PINBALL GAMES (1)
G26 RISK - brilliant strategy game (1)
G27 DONKEY KONG - very good arcade game! (1)
G28 BLACK JACK - good card game (1)
G29 DARK AGES (1)
G30 30,000 WORD DICTIONARY & ANAGRAM FINDER (1)
G31 TANK WARS (1)
G32 SCRAMBLE (1)
G33 JOYSTICK GAMES (1)
G81 PGA GOLF - PGA golf game, sample 3 notes on this game (2)
G82 BUST - latest puzzle game. V. good graphics (1)
G83 JIGSAW PUZZLE - excellent graphics (2)
G84 ARMY 12 - strategy board game. Mouse needed (1)
G85 BATTLE GROUND - action/strategy game (1)
G86 CONQUEST v1.7 - world conquering strategy game (1)
G87 LANDSLIP - strategy game, bid for electoral votes (1)
G88 DICE - new game VGA, mouse required (1)
G89 AIKEN - horoscope, mindreader, fortune telling etc. V. good (1)
G90 ARKANOID - good arcade type of game (1)
G91 BATTLE - a game for people who talk a lot (1)
G92 MARBLEMAN - brilliant arcade/board game (1)
G93 CONMAN - brilliant arcade game (1)
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G110 FAMILY FEUD - brill! Family game (1)

WINDOWS

- W101 ALMANAC - scheduler, calendar, reminder (1)
W102 CD-PLAYER - brilliant win. program (1)
W103 COMMAND POST v7.2d - front end menu for windows (1)
W104 SOUNDBLASTER - editor for win3, brilliant (1)
W105 EASY FORMATTER - v good formatter, easy to use (1)
W106 GRAPHICS WORKSHOP - excellent program (1)
W107 FINANCE MANAGER - covers all aspects (2)
W108 ICON MANAGER - superb utility (1)
W109 MICROCHECK - home finance management (1)
W110 ORGANIZE v1.53 - Excellent diary like program (1)
W111 PAINLESS ACCOUNTING - for windows, brill (2)
W112 PAINT SHOP PRO - display/convert/print & more (1)
W113 MONEY SMITH - business accounting program (1)
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W115 WINSPELL v1.05 - check spelling in win. apps. (1)
W116 ORION SOL v2.0 - database manager for win (1)
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Ascend 4

Never be disorganised again by following this exclusive information filled tutorial for our easy to use (not to mention free) September cover utility.

Ascend is a personal information manager, sort of a private secretary for your PC. It'll remind you of appointments, help you prioritise your time, record daily events and more. The entire program, in full, was given away on our

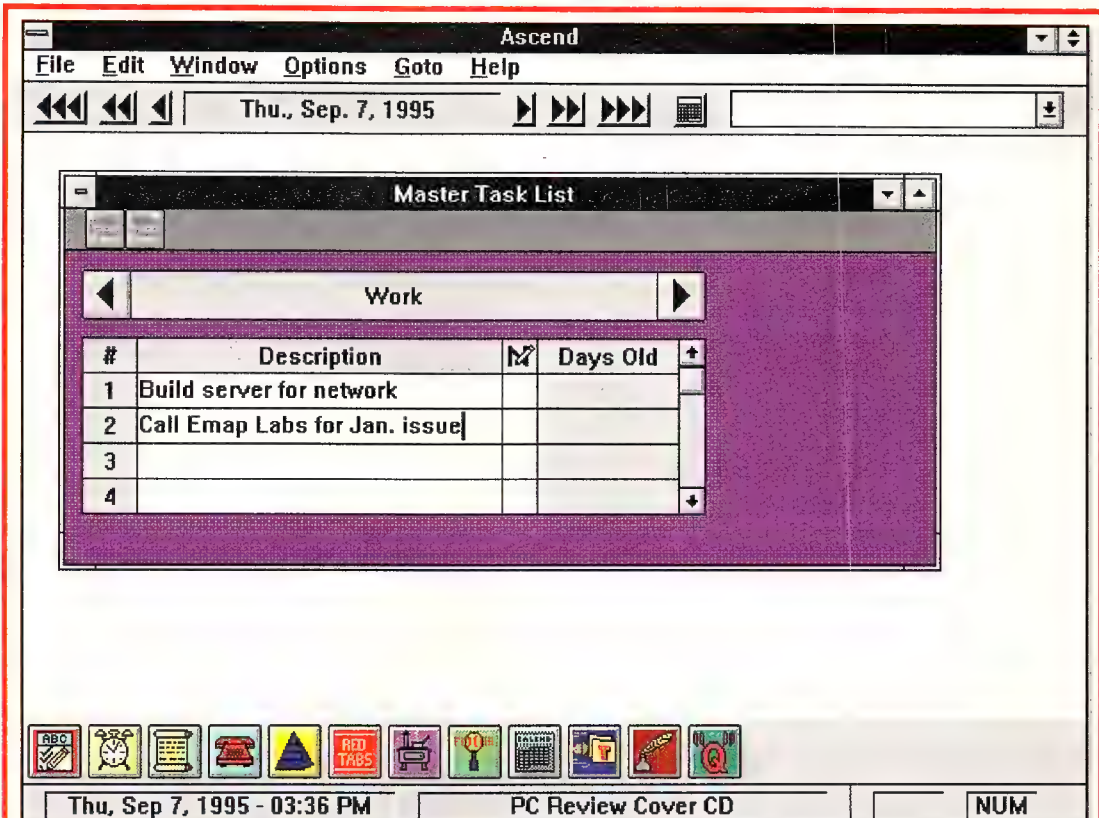
2 September issue cover CD. And each month our tutorials have shown you how to get the most out of this useful package. This month we reveal how to search all parts of Ascend for specific pieces of text, control master tasks and finally how to use the Journal, Red Tabs and Daily Record of Events.

What is Ascend?

Ascend is a personal information manager. We gave away the entire program, in full, on our September issue cover CD. If you missed this issue, but would like to get hold of it, all you need to do is call our Back Issues department on 01848 468888. They will supply prices and ordering details. If you are interested this issue also featured a Pentium roundup, an in-depth feature on animation, and of course, our regular Internet section, games reviews, news and more.

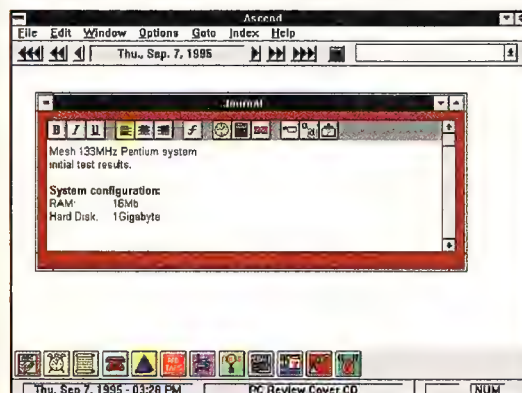
UPGRADE

This tutorial illustrates how to use Ascend Version 4, as found exclusively on our September issue cover CD. If you find it useful we recommend you upgrade to Version 5. This is big upgrade of the program, with new features, capabilities and even a revamped user interface. To upgrade call Softwerk on (01462) 832 244.



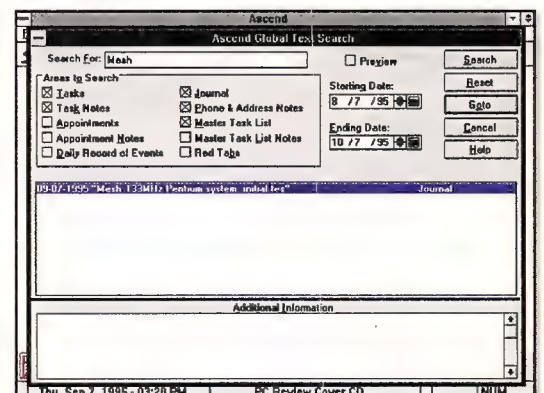
Master Blaster

▲ The Master Task List is similar to the Daily Task list, but is for long term jobs. Tasks are divided between one of five definable categories, and only the tasks relevant to the currently selected one are shown. Defining category names can be done from Options, Preferences, and Master Task List Preferences. Now select a category (from the arrows either side of the wide bar at the top of the Task List window) and enter your tasks. Clicking on the number to the left of the job descriptions allows them to be deleted or moved.



Journal

▲ The Journal works in a very similar manner to the Red Tabs and the Daily Record of Events, all use identical sets of icons. The first six icons from the left will be familiar to anyone (changing text to: bold, italic, underline, and setting justification to the left, centre and right). The next three icons insert the current time and date, or a page break. These are followed by cut, copy and finally paste. Note the paste option will paste both text and graphics from the paste buffer.



Global Search

▲ Found under the File menu Global Search gives you the power to search any of Ascend's modules for a word or words of your choosing. At the top of the dialog is a field to enter the text you wish to search for. Below this are tick boxes where Ascend is told which modules you wish to search. To the far right of these are buttons to start the search, ask for help and cancel the operation. If references are found they are shown, and after clicking on the references you can jump to any module using the Goto button.

DesignWorks was that brilliant drawing package we gave away on the cover CD-ROM of our August issue. In our second tutorial, we look at ways to create more interesting effects with text.



DesignWorks

Dealing with text



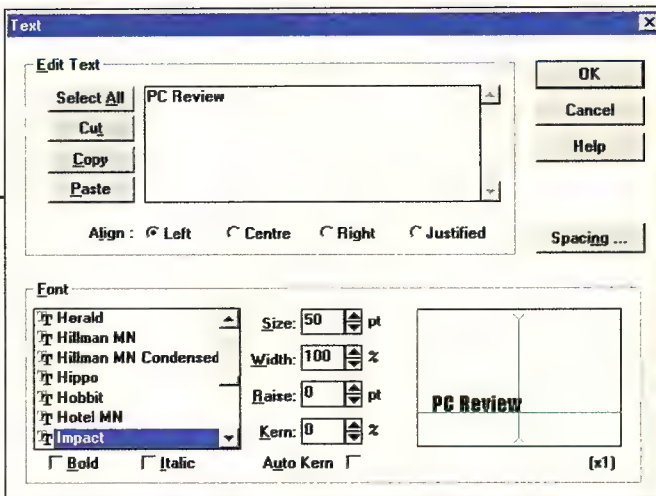
Click on the Text icon, then point to the area of the screen where you want the text to appear, and click again.



The Text box will appear, and this is where you enter your text and decide things like font, style and size. Click OK when you are happy.



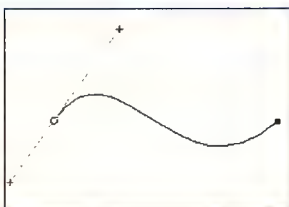
Hold down the Scale button and you gain access to three other basic transformations: Rotate, Skew and Mirror. Simply point to the object you wish to transform, hold down the left mouse button and move it around until you get the desired result.



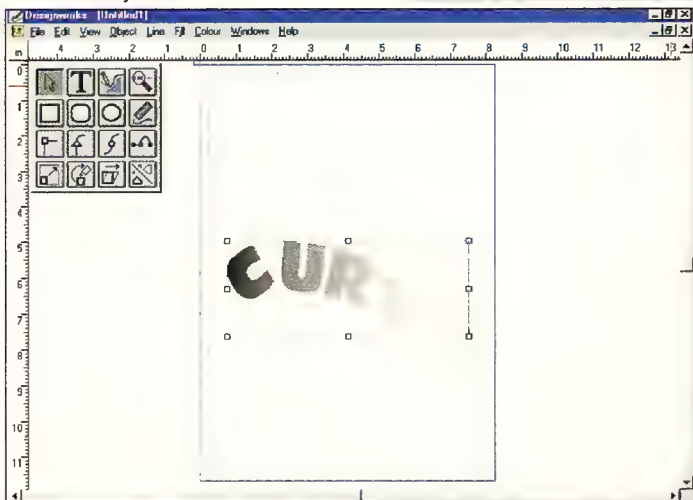
Round the Bend



You can make text follow a curved line using the following method. First, use the Draw icon to create a curve.



By manipulating the control points along the length of the new line, you can create any sort of curve you want.



Now enter the text you want. When you've done that, select the text using the pointer, and, holding down shift, select the curve as well. Now simply click on Join in the Object menu, and the text will follow the course of the new line. The faded grey effect was created using the Style option in the Fill menu.

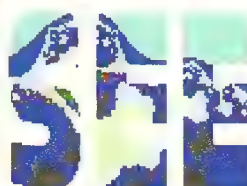
See through

Import...
Export...

It's easy to overlay opaque text over a picture, but what about if you want to have a background picture visible only through some text?



Load the background picture using the Import option in the File menu. Enter your text as usual, then use the Box tool to create a rectangle that's just larger than your background picture.



Now, select the box and click on Ungroup in the Objects menu. Now do the same with the text. Use the pointer tool to select all the text and the box (holding down the left button creates a box — everything inside will be selected) and choose Combine in the Objects menu. Now the picture will show through the "holes"



Yes sir, I like it

Those of you who might have missed out on our fabulous giveaway of DesignWorks on the cover of our August issue (number 46) will no doubt be clamouring to get hold of a copy, so call (01858) 468888 and talk to the nice people in our Back Issues department. You can check out DesignWorks' sister DTP package, Pressworks, by calling GSP on (01480) 496575.

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Q & A

Got a problem? Then worry not, we have the man to solve all your troubles technical, software or hardware. Mike James will have the answers — you just supply the queries.

YOUR TECHNICAL ENQUIRIES ANSWERED

HEADINGS

You may be just browsing or perhaps looking for a specific solution. Either way the questions and answers are now broken down into subject types to help you find the ones you want.



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Anything relating to video and graphics hardware.



SOUND

For all those audio-related conundrums.



HARDWARE

Motherboards, hard drives, BIOS and general hardware.



COMMS

For all your Internet and modem questions.



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PROGRAMMING

Coding problems aired and solved.



HARDWARE

Two months ago, my Dad brought a 25Mhz 386 PC from his office for me to use (the words sod and lucky come to mind — Ed). I reconfigured the machine, added a soundcard and eventually got it working to my satisfaction. Dad came up later to see the changes and just happened to mention that the PC now set up in my room had a nasty habit of crashing for unknown reasons.

Since then, I have duly found that yes... it does crash quite often. I've experimented with it, whacking it hard on the case, but to no avail. I've loaded up my favourite game, accidentally dropped a 3.5" disk on the top of the case only to see it crash right in the middle of the game. Sometimes it reboots (I thought perhaps it was a power problem to the motherboard). Sometimes it just hangs (I thought this was a memory problem). I've always been very handy when it comes to PCs yet this has plagued me for some weeks.

Another problem which I have found is that when is that when the computer is off, the internal clock keeps perfect time, yet when it is on and warm, the clock races away gaining hours ahead of the real time. PLEASE HELP!

Richard Hughes
Wiltshire

The source of the problem could be any of a thousand defects: a crack in the motherboard, a faulty connector, a badly soldered joint, or any component you care to think of. Clearly your chances of finding such a fault are slim, most manufacturers faced with the problem would simply relegate the motherboard to the bin and fit a new one!

You could spend years looking for the problem and get nowhere, but you might like to try cleaning all of the connections with switch cleaner — especially the expansion slots and the power connections — and push all chips back into their sockets. If this doesn't work I would suggest you give up! There are hardware testing boards and equipment that you can buy to take it further but it would be cheaper to buy

a new motherboard.

My final thought relates directly to your observation that the date and time clock runs fast when the machine is actually turned on. This is because while off, the date and time is maintained by the clock chip that has its own power. When you turn your machine on the machine's processor clock is used — which often isn't as accurate. It could be that the motherboard in the machine was designed to work at 16MHz and someone, perhaps the manufacturer, has simply cranked up the clock to 25MHz. This would make the date and time clock run fast — gaining roughly half an hour for every hour it is on. But I'm not 100% sure that's the problem.

However, I'm not surprised that the machine hangs every now and again as it was never designed to go that fast. If you can, try running it at a lower clock rate — use the Turbo button if there is one — and see if the problem goes away.



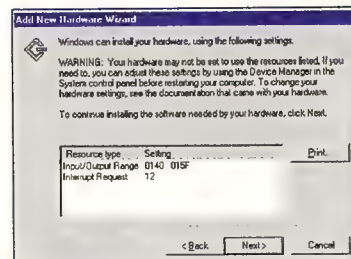
WINDOWS 95

I have tried to install a new sound card under Windows 95. This is supposed to be easy using the Installation Wizard as values for the port address, IRQ and DMA are supplied automatically. This would be fine, but they don't correspond to the actual values I have selected using jumpers. The boxes showing the values look as if they should be editable, but when I try to change them nothing happens. What do you have to do to tell Windows 95 not to use the defaults?

Steve Oakley
Manchester

Personally I think that this is a piece of bad design in Windows 95. You can change the defaults, but not while you are in the new hardware Wizard. What you have to do is accept the defaults and allow the machine to reboot. Once re-started click with the right mouse button on My Computer and select Properties. Next click on the Device Manager tab and select the sound card. Either double click on it or click the Properties button. You will then see a list of resources — port addresses,

IRQ numbers — and at last you will be able to click on the Change button to set the correct values. Of course you will have to reboot the entire machine to put them into effect, but at least this time it should all work. If not check that the resource assignments have changed and if not repeat the procedure. I have noticed that it sometimes takes more than one reboot for the "plug and play" hardware detection to get it right.



▲ It looks as if you could edit the values in the boxes — but you can't!



SOUND

I read with interest Q&A's "Blue Lightning Blues" (PC Review 43) as I have exactly the same problem with my 486DX2 66. I bought mine from 'Time Computers' who I duly asked to investigate the problem. They replied with a standard letter which indicates, without actually admitting it in so many words, that the DMA controller on the 486DX2 66 hardware is different from that of most PCs. As long as a game uses the BIOS to access the DMA channel there should be no problem, but won't work if it programs it directly. The only solution offered was to remove the motherboard and return it for an upgrade which would cost £92.83 and this was offered as though IBM were doing customers a favour.

As you can imagine I was less than pleased to be told that a machine I bought to play the latest games on is simply incompatible without an upgrade costing over £90. The galling part is that with my PC was a "Question & Answer" trouble-shooter to sort out any of the problems novices like myself might encounter. One of the questions on the sheet was, and I

quote: "Why do some games appear to run correctly with sound, but there is no digitised speech coming through the soundcard?"

Answer: "The digitised speech on a very few new games (e.g. Doom 2, Theme Park) is not compatible with some IBM 486 50/66 systems although the games themselves and all other sounds work OK".

Well thanks a lot for telling me before I paid £1,500, Time! As this sheet arrived with the PC, it would appear that the company was aware of the problem beforehand, yet no mention was made to me when buying.

I've rung Time's help line and written to the company also, but all I hear in reply is that programming techniques are to blame, and that there's nothing wrong with Blue Lightning itself. Time made no mention of its failure to report the problem to me prior to buying.

As for "a very few new games", I tried Doom 2, Magic Carpet and Dark Forces, and all three failed to work properly. I'm currently in correspondence with Time, attempting to get a full refund (my hard disk has now failed as well, so the PC is out of action permanently). I hope they're more obliging that they have been to this point, or I'm going to be saddled with the biggest waste of money of my life!

Andrew Lindsey
Northumberland

This is just one of a number of letters PC Review has received on this particular matter. Time was contacted and asked for a response when PC Review looked into IBM Blue Lightning compatibility with software. Our findings were that the IBM Blue Lightning motherboard does have problems with some games using digital sound. Time report that at the time it started to this motherboard the games in question weren't available and as such it couldn't have known there would be a problem. Having then discovered a problem IBM developed a fix for existing customers which Time offer and pass on to their customers at their cost price. Meanwhile Time Computers no longer use the IBM motherboard, opting for an Intel one instead.

PROGRAMMING

I've been using Qbasic for ages but want to now move on to Windows programming. I can't afford Visual Basic which would be the obvious next step and I'm not sure my machine has the power to do a good job of running it anyway. Can you suggest an alternative?

Thomas Bush
London

There really isn't a good low cost alternative to Visual Basic. Personally I prefer Delphi anyway, but that's not

answering your question. Alternatives to Visual Basic are hard to come by, but you could look out for a cheap copy of Realizer. It's slower than Visual Basic but you can do nearly as much using it.

If you need something cheaper still then try Liberty Basic from The Thompson Partnership on 01889 564601. It's shareware so you can try it out for free, but if you like it then the registration fee is £25. It's a bit odd and is closer to the older GWBasic, but it does work.



WINDOWS

I have had problems with my PC since I got it. After running Memmaker, it seems that Windows won't run, it just hangs after the logo. I've enclosed the config.sys and autoexec.bat files.

L Platt
Cheshire

Yes sometimes Memmaker does get it wrong and the result can sometimes be that the whole machine stops working, not just Windows. The solution to your problem is to go back to the state that the machine was in before Memmaker messed it up. Fortunately this is easy as long as you can edit your Config.sys and Autoexec.bat files. Memmaker alters the lines in the Config.sys to read something like:

DEVICEHIGH

/L:32111=C:\DOS\SETVER

To convert this back to its original state edit out everything from and including the word HIGH to before the equals sign. For example, the above line would be changed to:

DEVICE=C:\DOS\SETVER

In the Autoexec.bat file it adds the command LH to the start of some lines. The LH is followed by /L, some numbers and sometimes /S. You need to delete everything from the LH to the end of the numbers including the /S if present.

For example, the line:

LH /L:1,35488 MOUSE

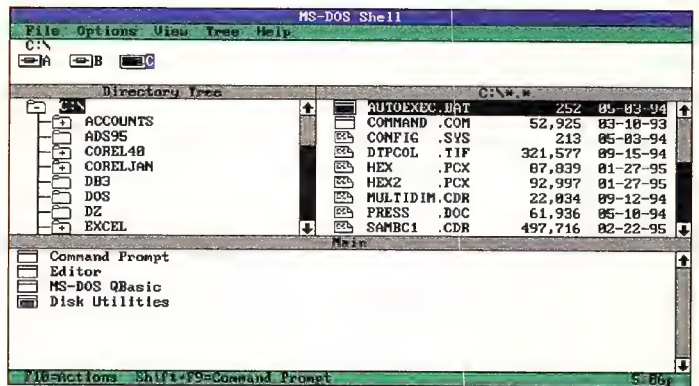
Would be edited down to just:

MOUSE

If you reduce both Config.sys and Autoexec.bat files in this way you should find that Windows starts working again but you will have less memory for DOS programs. You could give Memmaker another go, only use its Custom option and see if it can get it right. It's also worth keeping a backup of your Config and Autoexec files. Alternatively you could try QEMM as an alternative. It doesn't get stuck as often as Memmaker.

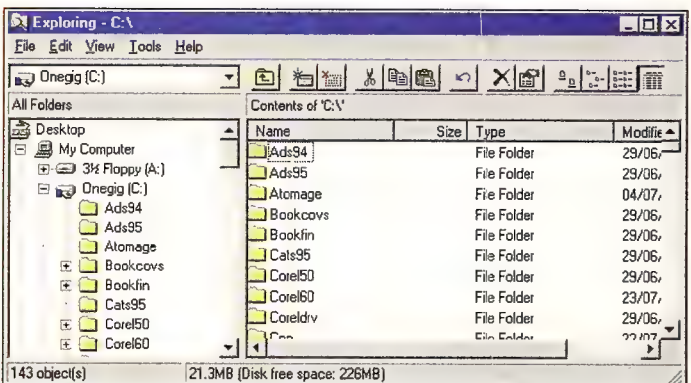
Step by Step to File Management

Last month we looked at how you can manage your files using Windows 3.1. But now, with the advent of Windows 95, some of us have moved up and want to know about its newer and better ways! First however, there's some advice if you are sticking with DOS.



Frame 1

The traditional DOS way of managing files is to use commands typed in at the DOS prompt. It isn't difficult but it is very easy to make mistakes. The problem is that you have to type in a file's full name including all of the directories that it is stored in - and this can be very long and almost meaningless! A much better solution is to get yourself a DOS file manager. If you are using MS-DOS 5 or later you will already have a file manager in the form of DosShell. Just type DosShell at the prompt and from then on you can manipulate files just as easily as if you were using Windows. If you have a mouse installed you can drag files from one directory to another. If not you will have to use the menu commands but you can still select files using the cursor keys. If you can't find DosShell then go back to your original installation disk - it might have been deleted from your hard drive. If you are using a version earlier than MS-DOS 5 then you will need to buy a suitable file manager. Even if you are you may still prefer to buy Xtree or try out DiskTree which is shareware.



Frame 2

If you are using Windows 3.1 or DOS file management is at least fairly stable with well known solutions. When it comes to Windows 95 the situation is very different because everything is so new and there are multiple ways of doing any given task. For example, you can, if you

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APPLICATIONS

I thought I was trying to do something simple when I started to record my weight using a spreadsheet — yes it's about a diet! The trouble is that the scales I use give me my weight in pounds and I think in stones and pounds. How do you convert from one to the other and is it possible to display the result in a single spreadsheet cell rather than having to use one for stones and one for pounds?

Paul Smith
Sussex

	A	B
1	=FIXED(INT(A1/14),0)&" & FIXED(MOD(A1,14),1)	209 6 14.138

▲ A heavy weight spreadsheet!

If you don't see why this is difficult give it a go before you read the rest of the answer!

Assuming that the weight in pounds is in cell A1 you can find the number of stones by dividing by 14 and throwing away the remainder. You can do this by using the usual division sign and the INT function which converts any result to whole numbers. That is:

stones= INT(A1/14)

To find the number of pounds you need the remainder after dividing by 14 and you can calculate this using the MOD(x,y) function which gives you the remainder when you divide x by y. In other words:

pounds= MOD(A1,14)

You could store each formula in a separate cell but a) it is neater to combine them together. To do this you need to convert each result into text. Exactly how you do this varies from one spreadsheet to another and there even some that you can't do it in. In Excel the complete formula is:

=FIXED(INT(A1/14),0)&" & FIXED(MOD(A1,14),1)

where the FIXED(value,d) function converts the value into text with d figures after the decimal point.

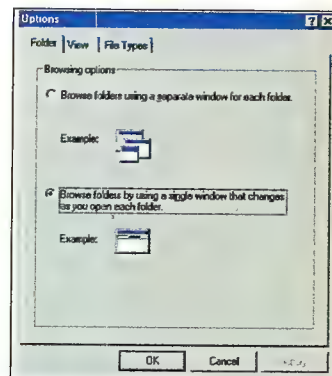
Just send your PC problems to Q&A, PC Review, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London. EC1R 3AU.

Step by Step to File Management Continued.

want to still use the File Manger. However you didn't change to Windows 95 to use the old 3.1 tools! The replacement for the File Manger is the Explorer. This looks very similar to the File Manager but you are in for a few shocks if you treat it as if it was the old File Manger. The main thing that is different is that you can't open more than a single window within the Explorer and this makes dragging files from one directory to another difficult. The solution is to either open two copies of the Explorer or use the left pane to show the destination directory while using the right pane to show the file you want to copy to it.

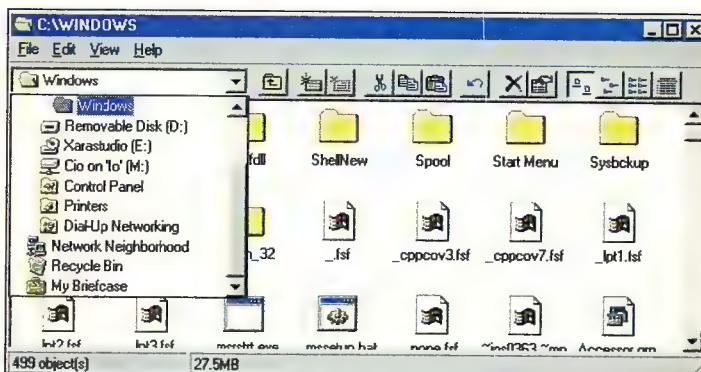
Frame 3

To be honest the Explorer is mostly a waste of disk space! But to discover how easy it is to manage files using Windows 95 you have to set your desktop up correctly. To be more specific you have to set My Computer so that when you double click on it to open it you can see the toolbar. This is important because without the toolbar showing it is much more difficult to move from one directory to another. The second important thing is to make sure that you select the option that doesn't open a new window each time you open a folder to see what is in it. Use the View/Options menu command and fill in the dialog box that appears as shown. If you don't select this option your screen will quickly become so cluttered that you can't see anything!



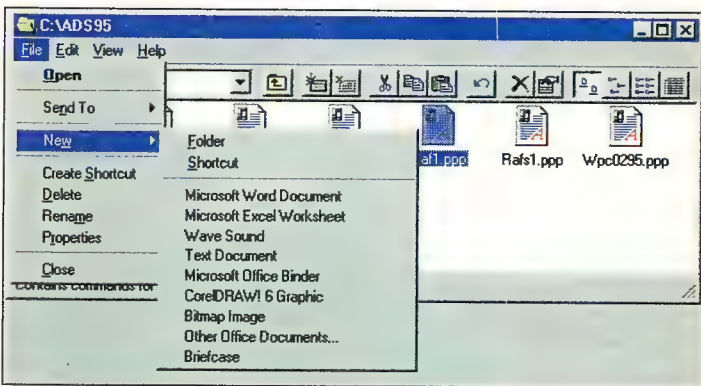
Frame 4

As long as you have set My Computer up as in step three navigating the filing system is easy. Open any device or folder by double clicking on it and move one level back up by clicking on the folder with an arrow in its icon on the toolbar. To jump back more than a single level use the drop down list. This shows all of the levels above the folder that you are currently looking at, including other disk drives.



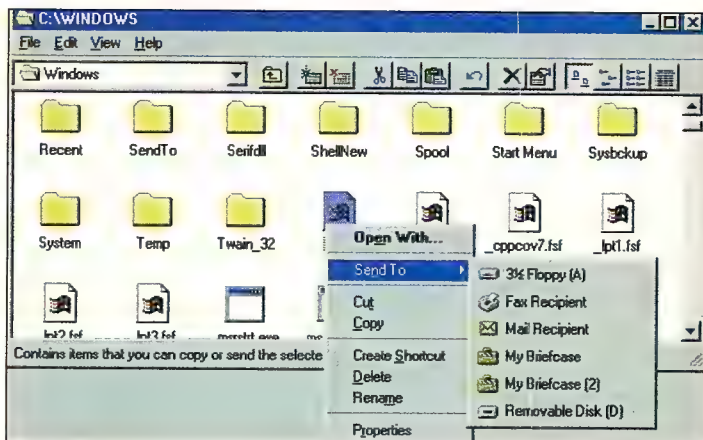
Frame 5

Given that you can now find your way around the filing system what can you do when you find the file you are looking for? Erasing a file or folder is easy, just drag it or even a group of objects to the Recycle bin. This is fine as long as you can see it on the desktop. If not you could move windows around until you do or just use the File/Delete command in the menu! Finally, to create a new folder or file use the File/New command and pick your option.



Frame 6

Dragging files to copy them is fine when you can see the destination folder. If not, open a second window by double clicking on My Computer and working your way down to where you want to be. The easiest solution is to select the object or group of objects and use Edit/Copy or Edit/Cut, or the icons on the toolbar, the right mouse button menu or Ctrl-C and Ctrl-V keyboard shortcuts. This puts the file(s) on the Clipboard and can be relocated with Edit/Paste.



Fan mail, Hate mail, E-mail

Make love, not war

Your recent feature on the uses of the PC by the military (Missile Command, issue 47) seemed to cover everything about the subject — what sort of PC's were used, what for, where etc, but one vital thing was missing, there was absolutely no discussion about the morality of their use. There was no mention of the fact that in the end, they were being used to help one group of people kill another. The Gulf war was mentioned a number of times, but again without any reference to the charred corpses of Iraqi soldiers on the road from Kuwait City or the civilians in the Baghdad bunker killed with a computer guided "smart" weapon. It may have slipped your mind, but war is about people dying — usually very painfully and if you're going to use war to help sell your magazine then the least you could do is to show how destructive it actually is. Perhaps you should have thought about it a bit more carefully.

Mrs Judith MacDonald
Dundee

We think about all our features and particularly when they involve something as serious as war. No-one is blind to the horrors of war, and with Bosnia and the recent VJ Day we didn't exclude comment on the morality of war lightly. The simple truth is that there was no way we could hope to touch on the subject with even the most cursory depth in any feature, let alone in the limited space available. The debate on morality and war has been raging since the earliest Christian philosophers and if two thousand years of thought have failed to provide any definitive answers we could only have succeeded in trivialising the subject. As a PC magazine we sought only to provide information on the uses of PC's by the military, we believe our

Using PCs in the field of combat is common place. ▶

readers are mature enough to decide on the morality, or lack thereof.

Cryptic X-Words

As something of a learner driver in terms of the information superhighway I was shocked to read recently that a French hacker had broken the data security program used by Netscape. One of the

main things which attracted me onto the net (and persuaded me to shell out all the money for the modem, connection charges etc.) was the ease of use that Netscape offers. I don't send highly confidential documents, nor am I particularly bothered that people should know what I download, but I do value my privacy and the thought of someone trawling through what amounts to private mail is not welcome.

I feel that I was deceived into thinking that I would have the same degree of privacy on the Internet as I do in the rest of my life. How can companies like Netscape get away with offering only second rate privacy to their customers?

Hugh Hook
Cornwall

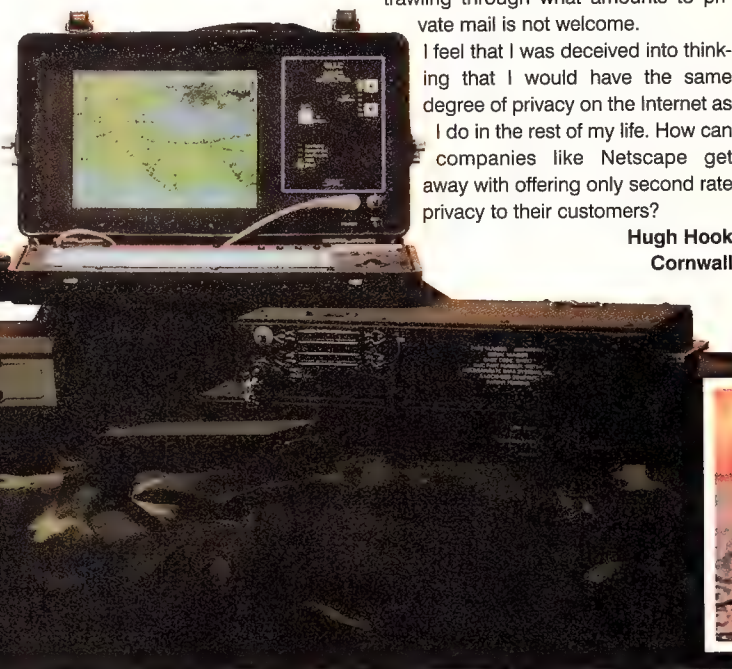
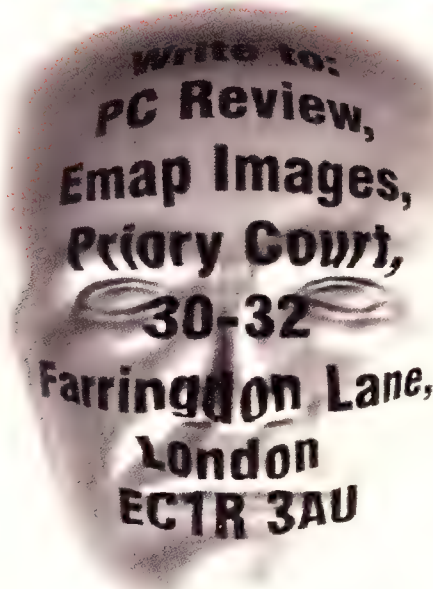
I think everyone who heard the news was shocked, but you're barking up the wrong tree when you lay the blame at Netscape's door. The security program in question was part of the non-US version of Netscape Navigator and only used a 40-bit encryption algorithm as opposed to the 128-bit version used in the US Netscape Navigator. If you're asking why it is that only US users get 128-bit encryption then look no further than the US government — it has forbidden the use of US created 128-bit encryption algorithms overseas. In fact one US cryptographer, Phil Zimmerman, is currently under criminal investigation, for making his PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) program available as freeware on the Internet, since the encryption algorithm is classified as military hardware. It's a situation that everyone realises is a bit ridiculous, but it's not easy to change the US government's mind. On the bright side though, the US administration will allow 64-bit encryption to be exported and it's estimated to be 65,000 times harder to crack than 40-bit.

Ready, take aim, fire, fire, fire!!!

When I went away to university I took my PC with me — great for writing reports (and the odd bit of Doom) and got it safely into my flat. Everything was fine until I went home to see my parents last month and the apartment block burnt to the ground — along with my PC. Fortunately no-one was hurt in the fire (although my neighbours two cats weren't so lucky) and everyone went about getting their lives back together (except for the cats). There was no problem with the insurance until it came to replacing my PC — which, it transpired, wasn't covered by my policy. The insurance company had me by the small print and so here I am a month on, with no PC. When I do save up enough money to buy another machine you can be sure that I'll keep enough aside to adequately insure it. A word of advice then, check your policies.

Yours, no longer a PC owner
London

It might be good to talk, but we like it even more when you write, so send your scribblings to the place on the face.



Like they say, never take anything for granted when it comes to insurance, and it's a real shame that you had to learn that particular lesson the hard way. Insurance companies can be very picky when it comes to PCs (especially because they're easy to nick) and you should look very carefully at your policy — don't just assume you're covered. It might cost a little more, but it's cheaper than having to buy a new PC

Windows 95 counterfeit?

Why all this fuss about Windows 95, I've been using it since the 1980s? No I wasn't part of some incredible beta testing programme (unlike everyone who's bought Windows 95 since its launch), I'm an Apple Macintosh owner. Long file names, a real desktop, shortcuts, plug and play and the "Start button" — all very, very familiar.

Please don't dismiss this as just another embittered Mac owner having a go at Bill Gates' evil empire though. Although just about everyone with a brain knows that the Mac operating system is better than Windows 95, let alone Win 3.1 (naturally excluding the lunatics who still like using DOS and yearn for the days when computers had valves), I know that a large degree of Microsoft's dominance was handed to them on a plate by Apple. What really gets me is that Microsoft has the gall to present Windows 95 as something totally revolutionary when it's nothing more than a third rate Mac rip off.

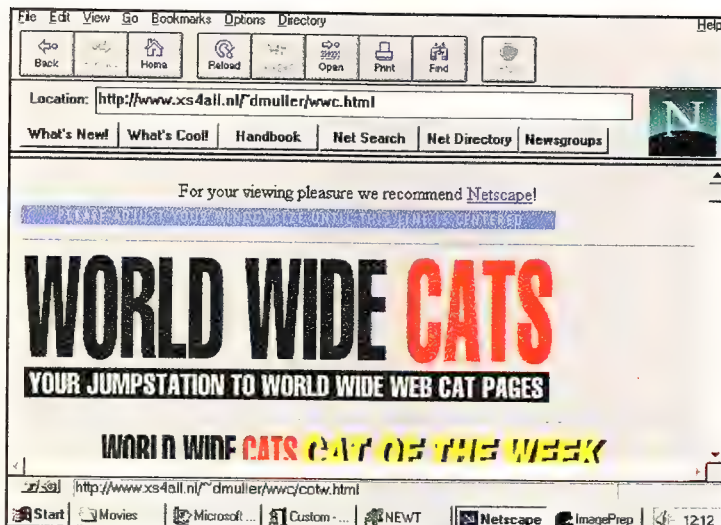
I know the saying that history is written by the winners, but it doesn't help that every PC magazine in the market seems intent on perpetrating the myth that Windows 95 is somehow ground breaking. It's not!

Leon Sharpe
Bradford

No-one is blind to the similarities between Windows 95 and the Mac OS, but the key thing to remember is that to a large degree the markets are very different. It's true that Mac owners have had many of the advantages of Win 95 for years, but the important thing to realise is that PC owners haven't. Up until now the closest we could get is Win 3.1 so Windows 95 is a really big improvement for PC owners. It's brought us close to a real operating system and the coverage it receives probably reflects that more than anything else.

Financially challenging

Is someone who usually has to wait for games to get a budget release before I buy, I'm often disappointed to find that by the time I do get the games, the



solutions to them were often printed so long ago that I've lost the issues they were in. What about waiting until games come out on budget before you print solutions?

J. Timmins
London W12

And be accused of discriminating against all the people who paid full price for their games and thus helped support the flow of budget titles? It's a pity that you lose the solutions before you get the games, but there's not much we can really do about it. For tips on specific games you could try writing in to "Help Wanted" (the address is in the tips section) or, if you're willing to damage your copy, you could tear out the tips pages and keep them somewhere separate.

Huh, what, yes, well, whatever?

Did you know that "PC Review" is not an anagram of anything at all but that Rik Henderson is an anagram of "Drink here son". Spooky, eh?

"No Brain" (aka Ian Brown)
Rhyll (aka Rhyll, I'm afraid)

Hmmm... do you have someone who looks after you? Points for originality though — it's not often that someone points out that your name isn't an anagram of anything. I think we can all sleep soundly in our beds from now on, safe in the knowledge that we are anagramless. Perhaps you could do with a little Thorazine slumber yourself.

Lost in (cyber) space

I'm sorry, that's it, I've had enough, I know it seems like I'm giving up too easily, but I just can't take it any more. What am I talking about — learning to program in C++ perhaps or getting a particularly difficult game to work? No, I'm talking about the Internet.

Well, not every thing on the net is interesting.

I swallowed all the hype, bought my modem and my software, paid the connection charges and spent days setting it up and then it was time to surf the net! What a waste of time and money! Huge web sites where people upload thousands of (bad) pictures of their cats or speculate about insignificant details of obscure TV shows — it's like opening a huge Christmas present and finding the only thing inside is a mouldy tangerine. To anyone else who's thinking about going on-line I have only one thing to say — "don't". I'm off to do something far more interesting with my PC — spending an afternoon fiddling with my autoexec.bat springs to mind.

Disgruntled and disgusted
London

I'm sorry to hear you had such a bad time on the net but I have to point out that your experience is by no means typical (in spite of the regularity with which such letters turn up on this page). A huge variety of people — from housewives to vicars — get a lot out of having access to the 'Net. The site with the pictures of cats (duller than dull though most normal people might find it) probably has an enormous appeal to some others. The only way for people to make up their minds about the Internet is to go on-line themselves, in reality, very few of them are disappointed. I suspect they don't appear here because they're too busy surfing the net.

When I were a lad

Dear PC Review
I, an ex-Amiga owner have just upgraded to a PC, but what I now realise is that I've also down-graded because of the following reasons —

- 1) PCs are the worst user friendly computers ever.
- 2) Windows is too slow compared to Amiga Workbench

3) The PC does not have built in Sound capabilities as Amigas do.

More?

4) You have to go through setting up DOS in a different way each time you buy a new game.

5) All the Amiga software has been converted and now costs more on the PC.

6) The PC does not have any programming software such as AMOS.

7) The PC does not have the means to have 200,000 colours out of 16.7 million colours built in. And last...

The PC, is actually next to useless, and I've wasted my money on one. Take my advice, change to an Amiga !!! or stay a looooooser!!!

Russell Lewis
CIX

Russell it's unfortunate that you feel you wasted your money on a PC, but not all your criticisms are valid. With Windows 95 the PC is more user friendly than ever (and should make setting up games a lot easier), and although the PC doesn't have some of the built in capabilities that the Amiga has, you decide what you want to pay for. The PC has "Click and Play" instead of AMOS and as for running Windows — the faster the PC... A lot of Amiga owners seem to be very loyal to their machines but the PC is the machine of the future.

You're not on the catwalk now

Why is Gareth Bissicks hawking on about how the PC looks (Fashion Statement, issue 47) when it's hard to think of anything more pointless?

As long as your PC does what you want it to do and doesn't crash or bomb every five minutes, then who cares what it looks like? If you want fashion try Paul Smith, or Armani.

Jason Petterson
Newcastle

Let's be fair to him, now. Having a PC that works is the most important thing of all, definitely, but if you either have to look at your own PC or someone else's all day (we certainly do) then it doesn't hurt to have something attractive to look at too. And since most of us can't actually afford an extensive collection of impressionist art then cuter PC's would certainly be no bad thing.

Our heads are swelling

Just a quick line to say that I loved the animation feature (Turn on, toon in, Issue 47) and to ask if I can win Letter of the Month?

Andrew Peters
Brighton

Just a quick line to say, "nice try, but no, you can't!"

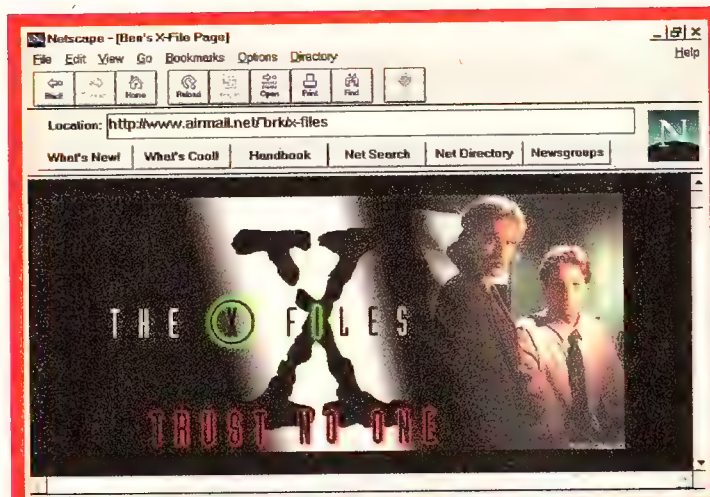
Surf Of the Month

Whether it's just a frisbee snapped on a cheap Polaroid camera, or a huge, flying alien mother-ship, the UFO debate is a fervent one. Rik Henderson rides the unexplained waves.

KEY

00:50
£ 00.00

Top: time taken
Bottom: amount spent
All prices are estimated at 4p per minute, local call rate off peak.



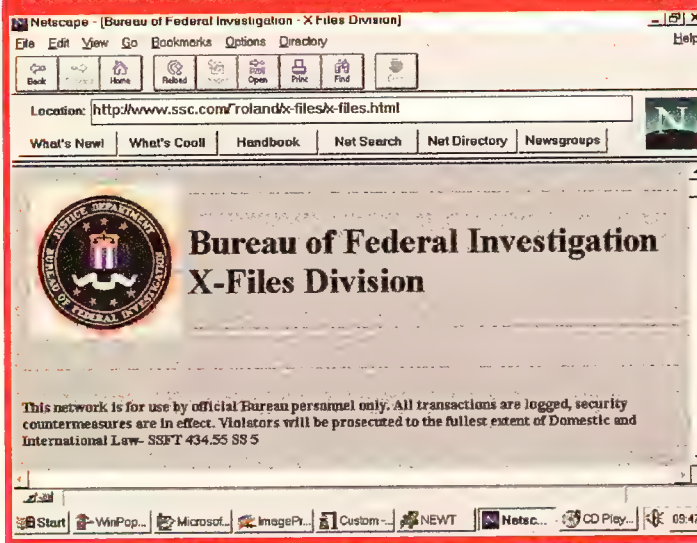
<http://www.airmail.net/~brk/x-files>

C'mon, let's be honest, there's only one place to go if your brief is 'Hey Rik, go find me some UFOs'. So, although I'm not a great fan of the 'X-Files' TV show, even I know that its followers are completely fanatical UFO buffs. So hopefully the X-Files link page will send me on a spiralling path to all that is unidentified, flying, and object-like. Unfortunately, as I really had out here is that Gillian Anderson is a sexsymbol to a generation of anachronists, and David Duchovny has appeared in nearly straight-to-video B-movies.

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£ 00.20

<http://www.ssc.com/~roland/x-files/x-files.html>

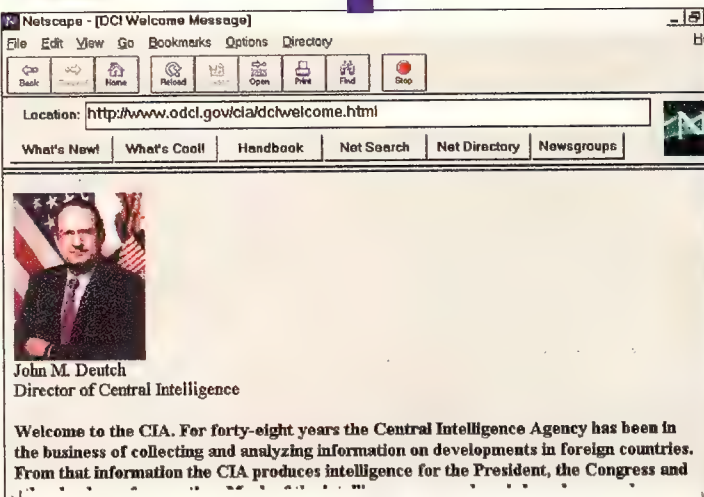
My next link sends me into what I thought would be an interesting archive of information, but it just turned out to be another X-Files enthusiast site. It did have fantastic presentation though, as the whole thing was layed out like an official FBI document, with the case files akin to classified memos. At the very least it offered me a link that was to change my surfing forever (well, at least to the end of this start anyhow).



<http://www.fbi.gov/homepage.htm>

Aha. Not only does the FBI have its own homepage, it's actually a very good source of crime-related material. Not a sniff of a UFO, but at least there was a link to a list of the top ten most wanted criminals with all the gory details of their misdeeds. It does urge you to not approach the villains, as they may suit a bullet in your cranium, but it makes for good bedtime reading.

00:35
£ 01.40



00:23
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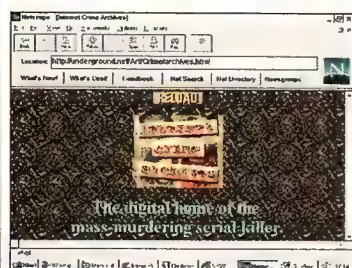
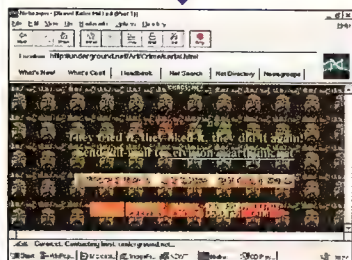
<http://www.odci.gov/cia>

From a mock-up FBI page, I was suddenly being proffered the official US government's CIA web site. This may sound like it's a illegal to mock up to and is the closest you'll ever get to being a hacker, and it's really, really exciting. It is, however, a) information that the Central Intelligence Agency wants you to know, and b) extraordinarily dull and boring. I quickly rushed for Yahoo (the search engine) at this point because I suddenly had the idea that if the CIA had an officially sanctioned web site then surely the real Federal Bureau of Investigation (or FBI) must also.

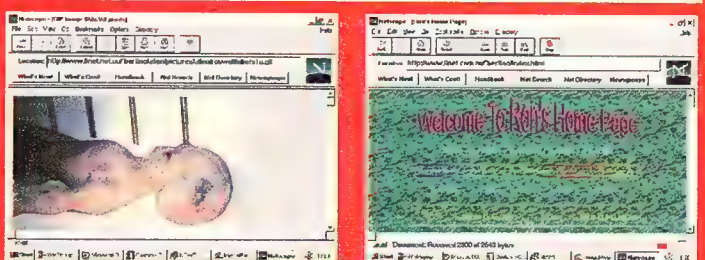
http://underground.net/Art/Crime/archives.html

It was at the FBI site that I decided that the Unexplained should remain as such, and that it was far more interesting to delve into the more morbid aspects of crime. Hence, logging onto the infamous Underground Crime Archives. Like the Crime Files Multimedia CD-ROM reviewed last issue, it focuses its attention entirely on murder, be it genocide, manslaughter or just common old garden serial killings. It's guaranteed to offend as it's rather more feverishly written than the aforementioned Crime Files — but is a good place to go to find out pure fact because the research is very up to date.

01:02
£ 02.48



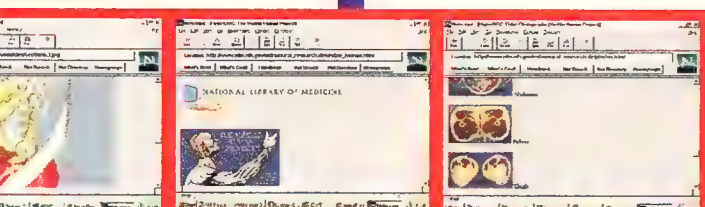
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http://www.linnet.com.au/~bertino/index.html

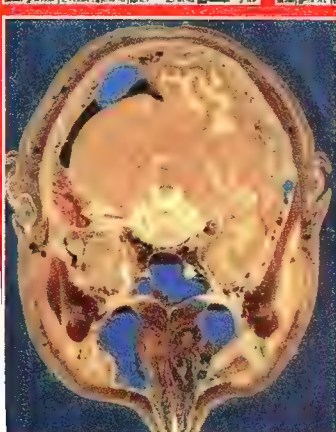
Bizarrely I ended up where I came from, because whilst looking for other websites, I stumbled upon the Roswell Alien Being. Ron Bertino's site is, like most e-zines, a chatty area that documents any subject that Mr Bertino happens to be interested in at the time. His main interest though tends to be UFOs, and he claims that he has the largest UFO archive on the net, and offers you a plethora of the official Roswell incident pictures in gif format for you to download. Recent additions include some colour Roswell pics and the proof positive (though of alien constructs on the moon, it is interesting, if only for those who admire convincing special effects. Me? I'm off down the park with a hula hoop and a small child with a bowl on his head. I could make myself a fortune.

02:03
£ 04.92



http://www.nlm.nih.gov/extramural_research.dir/visible_human.html

Once you've had the pleasure (?) of trawling through the list of the World's top serial killers (including those like Henry Lee Lucas who has been convicted of over 200 separate counts of murder), you like to see them get their come-uppance. So I was more than happy to take a stop off at the Visible Human Project site, where the body of an executed murderer was sliced into thin strips and ended up looking like a delicatessen's floor. Each slice was photographed and this site explores into the very meat a human body is made of. There are computer animations of a journey quite literally through his body and the an essential piece of research material for anyone into anatomy or Plasma (art).



Net News

Pez Home Page

<http://www.cs.ucdavis.edu/~tefford/pez.html>

Remember those plastic container things with famous character's heads and sweets that taste like house bricks? The controller of this new site certainly does. He has dedicated his own personal slice of cyberspace to the hugely popular 70s Pez widgets.

Yearling Interactive TV Guide

<http://www.yearling.com>

If you're fed up with the Radio Times because it keeps being chewed up by the family pet (which is even more surprising if you have a goldfish), Yearling has put on the 'Net an interactive TV guide that will ask you what your personal TV viewing details are and then compile a special listing just for your preferences. It's free to use, but could do with having an option for VideoPlus codes with the information.

The Soundroom

<http://snhungar.kings.edu/sndroom.html>

The 'Net has become a valuable source for material of all kinds and more and more sites are sprouting up offering copyright free .wav and .avi files to add to your latest musical masterpiece. The Soundroom hasn't got many files in its archive as yet, but it promises a lot more soon.

Desire Magazine

<http://www.desire.co.uk/>

Desire is an adult magazine for both sexes that has been in print for a short while and is now on the 'Net. The interesting aspect is that the magazine is remaining subscription only, and in a backlash to the mainstream UK magazine distributors, claims it will have great success by enticing subscribers through its 'Net site. The site is well written and informative — a good indication of the magazine itself.

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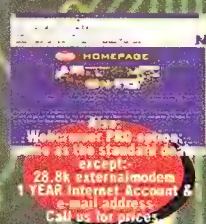


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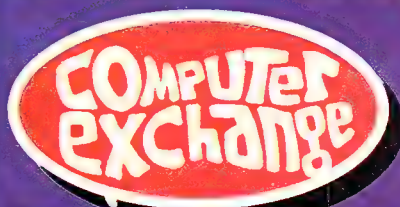
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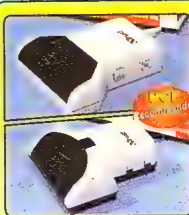
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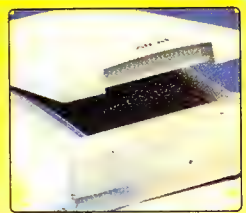
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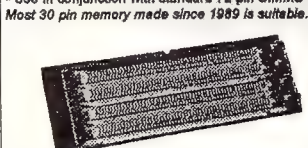
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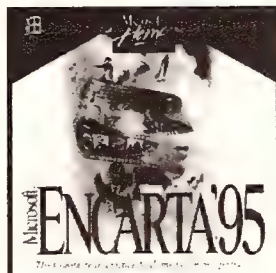
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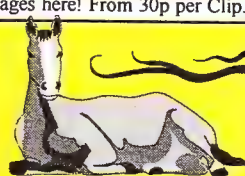
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Film Stars

Not only do we bring you the best of the M-PEG releases, but this month we also sent Rik Henderson to the pictures with a huge tub of popcorn...



MORTAL KOMBAT

(rating: 12)

In cinemas now

I must admit that I expected very little from this latest movie apparently supposed to capitalise on the popularity of video and computer games. Just look at the track history of similar experiments (Mario Bros and Streetfighter were both extraordinarily poor). I was shocked, though, to find out that not only is Mortal Kombat faithful to its game roots, it's a very enjoyable film indeed. I'd admit that it panders towards the younger members of society, but the look and design of the film is very dark and adult indeed. Call it a cross between Enter The Dragon and The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. It doesn't take itself too seriously and the fight sequences will really blow you away.

9



THE NET

(rating: 15)

In cinemas now

It had to happen didn't it? With 35 million people currently logging onto the internet, it was inevitable that some movie corporation would try to exploit the subject matter. Unfortunately all they seem to have done is cranked out a Pelican Brief-style action-thriller and substituted last year's big subject matter, law, for the catchword of today. Apart from that small change there is nothing new here that John Grisham hasn't already done to death in one of his somewhat formulaised movies. The film ends up being so standardised and feeble that even the gratuitous chucking in of the fantastically good looking Sandra Bullock as the leading lady fails to lift the what should be a straight-to-video attempt.

5

NEXT MONTH:

In the next issue I'll be looking at other new films involving computer themes including Hackers and Johnny Mnemonic.

Hatstand

A slightly new angle for Hatstand this month, as we turn the whole thing into a head-to-head bout with one of our staff taking on a professional. This month: racing games (with a motorcycle courier).



▲ **Fatal Racing:** Pat gains an unfair advantage by cunningly unplugging John's joypad when he's not looking. The cad.

7:21pm Fatal Racing

The first round of the tournament turns out to be the most popular of the day's games. Motorbike courier John is used to playing with his Sega Megadrive, though, and seems initially perplexed by the advanced gameplay of a PC.

Pat has been elected PC Review's champion, guardian of the magazine's honour, by dint of the fact that everyone else has already left to go to the pub. Rather worryingly, Pat is the only person in the office not to have made it through to Fatal's second set of courses ("I haven't been playing the game for long," he blusters).

We elect to use the Zizin course (level two), complete with nasty loop and nastier glass platform. After a sturdy team talk and a couple of cans of lager, the

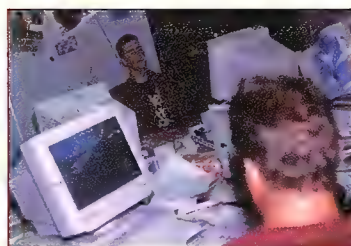


boy Fox does us proud, turning in a best lap time of 46.32. John can only manage 51.86, which he's reasonably happy with after clocking a terrible 2:14.53 on lap one.

Worst excuse: John, with "If I hadn't fallen off eight times on the first lap, would have thrashed you."

Biggest foul up: John falling off eight times on the first lap.

Score so far: Pat 1, John 0.



▲ **The contenders face off before the first lap. Grrrr.**



▲ **Look at the concentration on those faces. Scary.**

8:02pm Need for Speed

Given that Need for Speed and Fatal Racing are more than a little similar, we decide that extra marks will be awarded in this game for the best crash. Pat goes first and puts in some brilliant attempts, including a spectacular mid-air collision with a police car. He manages four crashes in all, and a total time (on the coast course) of 3:47.1 — pretty good.

When it comes to his turn, John plumps for the behind-the-car view, compared to Pat's driving seat perspective. This might be of interest to psychologists, but all that matters to us is that it effectively makes John's car impossible to control, with the result that he takes a lengthy 4:53.6 to reach the



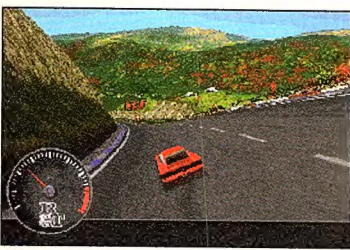
▲ Finally John comes into his own and blasts Pat right off the track

8:46pm Micro Machines 2

John's face lights up when we announce the next game in the schedule. It turns out that our courier friend is a bit of a whizz on MM2. Pat starts making excuses ("I don't know this game at all"). We choose the first course



▲ There's no contest — Pat loses within seconds.



▲ John is left struggling as Pat speeds along an open road...

finish line. The upside is that John manages to crash a highly impressive five times. The best of the lot — a quadruple pirouette followed by a triple roll — earns a round of applause from the crowd (including sad Pat) and the bonus point.



But the cocky young lad comes cropper on the next bend.

st advice: Pat saying, "You're on the wrong side of the road, don't forget this merica."

t finish: John flying over, rather than ss, the finish line, taking two other with him. (The second best crash of evening.)

re so far: Pat 2, John 1.



t takes it easy and cruises to pole win in Need for Speed.

(Rollercoaster) and John makes swift work of the PCR man, wiping out all his lives before they'd even reached the second bend.

We had planned on getting the courier drunk so that our boy could win, but John is driving and won't touch a drop. Pat has already polished all the booze off anyway. Things are not going according to plan.

Food and drink left: One mushroom and courgette bran muffin that no-one wants. We wonder why?

Total time Pat's car was on the course: 1.3 seconds.

Score so far: Pat 2, John 2.

8:49pm Al Unser Jr

The final game, and — as it happens — the decider. Everyone pulls a face when the game loads. Pat informs us that it's "an absolutely terrible game", before confessing to John that he actually reviewed it for the magazine. (Is this contest rigged or what?)

There's no other way to judge the outcome than by who passes through the most time checkpoints. John makes



▲ Andy prods the contenders with knives to get them to smile,



▲ Al Unser's Arcade Racing — the deciding round, and tension is running high as the lads sit on the grid, champing at the bit.



▲ And they're off. At first it looks like a foregone conclusion



▲ Look — Al Unser himself has dropped by. Or maybe not.

three and skids to a halt a few yards from the fourth. Pat almost doesn't make the first, relying on a freak gust of wind to propel his stationary car across. Eventually, as we were half expecting, Pat conks out at exactly the same point that John did.

Best unsubstantiated claim: John with "Damon Hill used to work for West One Couriers."

Final score: Pat 2.5, John 2.5.

Post match analysis

The contest has ended in a draw. Other PCR staffers, returning from the pub, are disappointed that Pat has let down the magazine's honour. They suggest a

boxing match as a decider, and offer to help John, but it's too late — the security guard turns up to chuck us out.

Pat opines rather wimpily that "justice has been done". John is slightly more pugnacious: "I would have kicked his arse with more practice," he claims. Either way, it's a fairly inconclusive start to this series we're terming 'PC Review versus the World'.

In next month's action-packed issue, match two — another PCR staffer takes on a professional at their home sport. Why not start up a gambling ring with your friends and stake vast sums of money on the outcome? We promise not to let you down.

In the blue corner...



Name: Pat Fox
Age: 24
Profession: PC Review journalist
Drives: His mum's Volvo (occasionally)
Fave racing games: Fatal Racing and Ridge Racer

In the red corner...



Name: John Shorrock
Age: 29
Profession: Motorcycle courier
Drives: Ford Fiesta and motorbike
Fave racing games: Micro Machines 2, Road Rash and Skidmarks

NEXT

month

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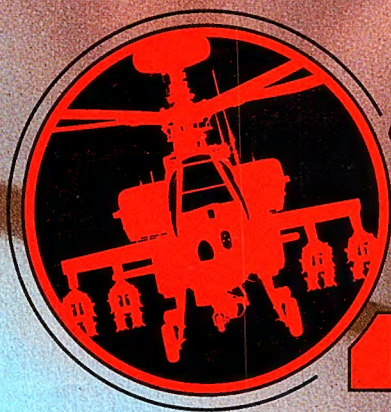
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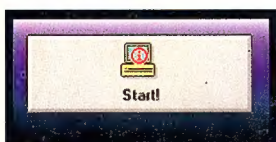
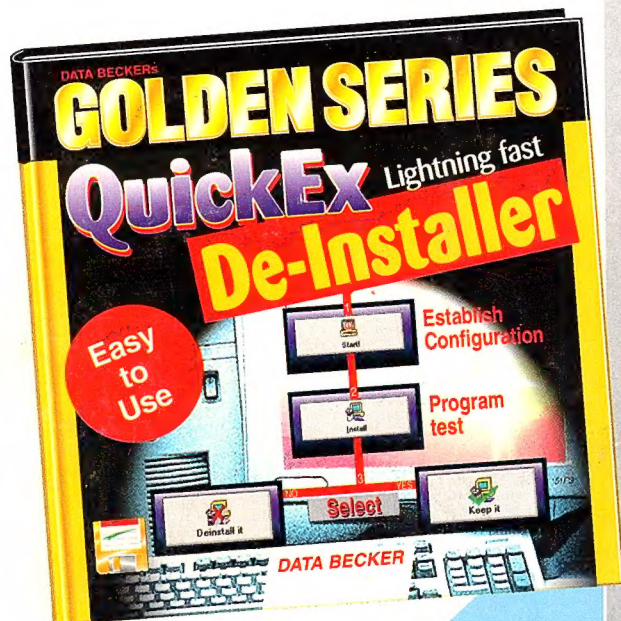


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